

**ROLE OF EXTERNAL POWERS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR
INDEPENDENCE IN EAST TIMOR,
1974 - 2002**

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2005

Dedicated

To

My Family



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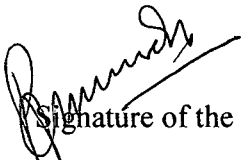
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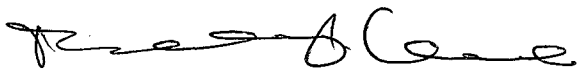
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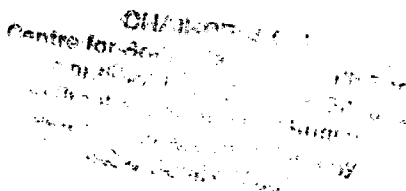

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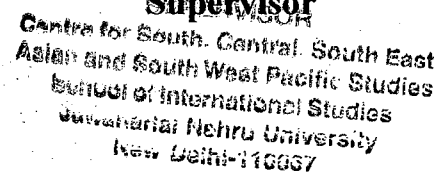
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INTRODUCTION

The quest of territorial acquisition has been a method for acquiring power since time immemorial. Due to the paucity of the land resources, the idea of establishing an over seas colony took a giant leap since the 15th century when the naval power began to gain strength. This quest has resulted in two world wars to diminish the power of another rival entering in the contest. Since the destructive tendencies of the war, the United Nations was born to mitigate and stop such rivalries taking shape in a huge war and since then decolonisation has been an ideal for survival.

In the final quarter of 20th century, the residual practice of decolonisation has been influenced by standards sanctioned by its previous beneficiaries who dominate the General Assembly of the United Nations. The bigger powers have played a larger role in the independence of these small nations, than has their independence struggle. Since 1960, after the passing of the regulation 1514 by the United Nations, there has been tremendous pressures on the colonisers to decolonise their colony.

The one thing remained starkling in this whole issue of decolonisation that none of the country till date has been able to be decolonised smoothly, through a transient process. The decolonisation though, has been often followed by a bloody civil war. In the quest of power, the larger and powerful nations of try to subdue the minnows and if favourable encroach into its personal dominion to establish its presence. In this endeavour they often ally with the larger powers who not only could sanction their trial but also contribute and assist them for achieving their goals in lieu of some strategic benefits.

The case in stud, East Timor went through such a phase. It got independence from Portugal in 1974, through a coup that took place in Portugal. East Timor at that time was not prepared for its independence and had not even seen any major struggle in its history. Soon the independence was followed by a major civil war and Indonesia who had been

eyeing for East Timor since its independence, grabbed the opportunity and made East Timor its province.

Since then numerous lives had been sacrificed for the independence of East Timor. With the assistance of U.N. and Australia coupled with the downfall of Suharto, the events favoured for the independence of East Timor. The U.N. the guided East Timor to achieve self-dependence an ultimately East Timor became independent in 2002.

The dissertation has been divided into four chapters. Chronologically explaining the events in East Timor and the role of external powers, such as United States of America, Australia, Portugal and the United Nations, that shaped the events with their assistance. The first chapter named 'Role of External Powers', deals with the phase of East Timor after the Portugal coup. It explains how East Timor got independence after the Caetano regime was overthrown by the coup. The small nation suddenly woke up from deep slumber by the jolt of decolonization. This also deals with the formation of the political parties which helps us understand the claim of Indonesian legitimacy of the occupation.

The second chapter 'East Timor under Indonesia' highlights the traumatic phase when Indonesia tried all its way out to incorporate East Timor into Indonesia. Australia then took a U turn and legitimised the Indonesian claim. Portugal tried its best to save its last colony from the clutches of Indonesia but was helpless. UN passed resolutions but it could not stop Indonesia, though it never recognised East Timor as a part of Indonesia. The third chapter 'Dili Incident, Australian Intervention and the Ballot' explains how an incident changed the fate of East Timor and garnered international criticism against Indonesia. The Dili incident was captured by a cameraman and was telecasted all over the world, due to which the entire international community criticized the Indonesian army. Also how the fall of Suharto and the UN assistance helped East Timor to achieve freedom from Indonesia.

The fourth and the final chapter, 'The Role the United Nations', deal elaborately with the assistance provided by the United Nations in making them self dependent. The role of UNTAET is extensively dealt. Ultimately the Conclusion sums up every thing and helps us understand the ordeal faced by the East Timorese. This also helps us understand how the international community can change things with their assistance if they want to.

CHAPTER ONE:
ROLE OF EXTERNAL POWERS

TIMOR, or Timur, is the eighth, numbering from Sumatra, in that long line of islands called the Sunda, which contains the more familiar islands of Java and Bali. Timor is connected by many smaller islands with the Sunda chain and with the islands of Flores and New Guinea, but such connections are lacking with the Australian continent to the south. The island is long and narrow, approximately 350 miles in length and 60 miles in average width.¹ The natives of Timor are of Malayo-Polynesian stock, with some Papuan blood, and resemble the Dyaks of Borneo in type and colour and culture. They are slight in build of below average height, and very dark in colour, and they have frizzled, bushy hair. There are three principal tribes on the island: the Timorese and Kupangs in the southwest, and the Belo-nese in the centre and east. These three groups appear to be of independent origin. They are divided into many small tribes, which speak a multitude of dialects. Native culture is negligible.²

East Timor has had a chequered history replete with ups and downs. Long before the Portuguese and the Dutch entered the region, the island of Timor formed a part of the trading networks centred politically on the East Java and then on the Celebes (Sulawesi). These networks were tied into commercial links with China and India. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Malacca on the western coast of Malay Peninsula was a political power of the first rank.³ It was the most important commercial centre in Southeast Asia as well as the diffusion centre of Islam. The first recorded European settlers in the proximity of Timor were the Portuguese Dominican friars from Malacca who settled on the island of Solor in 1566. There they built a fortress, which they garrisoned with their recent converts from Solor and Flores. Around the fort a community of *Mestico* Timorese grew up and they were offspring of Portuguese soldiers, sailors and traders from Malacca and

¹ Jolliffe Jill, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism* (Queensland, 1978) p.12.

² William Burton Sowash, "Colonial Rivalries in East Timor", *The Far Eastern Quarterly* (1948) vol.7, no.3, p.226.

³ D.G. Hall, *A History of South East Asia*, (New York, 1968) p.211

Macau who intermarried with the local women. They were called *Topasses*, Black Portuguese or *Larantuqueiros*.⁴

At this stage the Portuguese made annual trips to the island of Timor to collect sandalwood and trade in finished goods. When their trading rivals, the Dutch captured Solor in 1613, the population of the fortress moved to the neighbouring island of Larantuka. In 1641, Malacca was lost to the Dutch by the Portuguese. By 1653, the Dutch began to consolidate their hold over Western Timor and from 1662 onwards, began displacing the Portuguese, even though their competition was regulated by a treaty entered into a year earlier in 1661 which gave Dutch the western part of the Timor Island. This led them to concentrate on the eastern region of the archipelago.⁵ There were constant struggle between the Dutch and the Portuguese over the possession of Solor, while Larantuka remained firmly under the Portuguese control till the seventeenth century. Thereafter, sovereignty in the island was divided between Holland and Portugal, the former in the western part of the island and the latter in the eastern portion. The Dutch chose Kupang for their capital; the Portuguese chose Lifao but later moved to the less salubrious but more easily defended site of Dili.⁶

The 'Black Portuguese' were responsible for much of the unrest on the island. Unlike the Dutch, the Portuguese intermarried freely with the natives and thus had arisen a mixed group, described as intractable and treacherous. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these 'Black Portuguese' with their white countrymen made repeated attempts to expel the Dutch from Timor. Aware of the danger, the Dutch East India Company in 1755 sent an official, Paravicini, to conclude new treaties with the principal tribes in order to consolidate Dutch authority, but friction along the border continued. While the Dutch authorities were absorbed in warding off attacks by the British and during the British interregnum, the Portuguese seized the opportunity to extend their influence on the island. At one time, insubordination of the natives, allegedly

⁴ John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom* (London, 1999) pp.3-4.

⁵ Sowash, n.2, p. 227.

⁶ Geoffrey C. Gunn, "The 500-Year Timorese *Funu*", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (2000) vol.32, no.1&2, Jan.-June, p. 6.

incited by the Portuguese, necessitated the maintenance of a garrison of 14,000 troops in Dutch Timor.⁷

The chronic border disputes led to attempts by the Dutch to purchase Portuguese Timor. Portugal, however, with a pride born of happier days, refused to separate from this last piece of her former East Indian Empire, however unprofitable and ill-governed it might be, and declined to do more than to negotiate the frontier question. Negotiations to this end were carried on over the years 1847 to 1851 but came to naught when Portugal rejected the settlement arrived at by the commissioners.⁸

These continual disturbances gave rise to new negotiations for a better solution of the border question. Both powers expressed a desire to abolish the troublesome enclaves. To this end, a convention was signed in Lisbon in 1893, which provided for a mixed commission to determine the new line of demarcation. After a long exchange of notes between the two governments, a conference was called at The Hague, in 1902, in an attempt to resolve the differences that had arisen in the mixed commission. The question of the Timor boundary appeared at last to have been settled, but once more a difficulty arose. After further futile negotiations, the two powers agreed, in 1913, to submit the controversy, which had arisen from inaccuracies in the map employed at the 1902 conference. Finally in 1914 the boundary on Timor then was demarked along the limits in vigour at the present time.⁹

A major break occurred as a result of the outbreak of the Second World War. When the war broke out in Europe in 1939, Lisbon declared neutrality. However, the location of Timor as the easternmost island of the Indonesian archipelago, adjacent to the Australian continent, made it of great strategic value to both Australia and the occupying Japanese power. Ten days after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, Dutch and Australia n forces jointly occupied the island of Timor on 17 December 1941 and stayed there for the

⁷ Jill, n.1, p. 22.

⁸ Werner Levi, "Portuguese Timor and the War", *Far Eastern Survey* (1946) vol.15, no.14, July, p. 221.

⁹ Gunn, n.6, p. 8.

next thirteen months, evacuating to Australia in February 1943. On 19 February 1942, the Japanese attacked and landed troops in Dili.¹⁰

Of great historical significance were the 400 Australian commandos in Dili, who were presumed dead and who succeeded in pinning down some 21,000 Japanese troops, inflicting 1,500 deaths on the Japanese at a loss of only 40 of their own. During the war, Portuguese Timor suffered much war damage, with the Timorese people suffering much deprivation, with the loss of 40,000 lives. According to one study, the population of East Timor is believed to have declined from 472,000 in 1930 to 403,000 in 1946, with many deaths also caused by disease and starvation. After the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, Portugal regained control of East Timor. From August 1945 until 1975, Portugal maintained uninterrupted control of the territory except for the outbreak of an anti-colonial rebellion in 1959 in the Viqueque region, which was quickly suppressed.¹¹

The “Carnation Revolution” in Portugal, which led to the overthrow of the Caetano regime on 25 April 1974, opened a new era for the Portuguese colonies, including East Timor. The news of the Lisbon coup first reached East Timor through Radio Australia.¹² The Governor was reluctant to make any statement, being a strong supporter of the Caetano regime; he had publicly denounced the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (AFM) two days before the coup. There were two options in front of Portugal; one was in compliance with its newly found liberal ideals, to give the people of East Timor the right to self-determination. The other was to let Indonesia incorporate East Timor, which was what Indonesia wanted.¹³

The coup came as a surprise to the interested parties, all of whom were to play a crucial role in events of the coming years. Indonesia, where the intelligence services were pressing the government to annex East Timor; neighbouring powers, such as Malaysia and Australia staking out their claims in the region’s rapid development; and the

¹⁰ David Walton, “Japan and East Timor: Implications for the Australia-Japan Relationship”, *Japanese Studies* (2004) vol.24, no.2, September, p. 234.

¹¹ Levi, n.8, p. 222.

¹² Jill, n.1, p. 61.

¹³ Taylor, n.4, pp. 25-26.

industrialized nations of Western Europe, Japan and the United States, concerned about strategic and economic interests in South East Asia.¹⁴

The changes in Lisbon had a profound impact on Timor's elite centred on the towns and notably Dili while the rural society had very less immediate impact. There were technically no political parties in East Timor at this time. Under the Caetano regime, the formation of the political parties was forbidden; only the *Accao Nacional Popular*, the political organ of the corporate Portuguese state was allowed.¹⁵ The student administrators with more senior bureaucrats, who had been incorporated in the colonial politics by standing for the legislative assembly in the 1960s, as well as leading Timorese landowners, formed the bases for the two main political parties organized in Dili after the April coup.

What was initially the most popular party titled itself the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), which was formed on 11 May 1974. Its programme called for the democratisation, income distribution, human rights, but above all, for "Self-Determination for the Timorese people oriented towards a federation with Portugal with an intermediate stage for the attainment of independence", and a "Rejection of the integration of Timor into an potential foreign country".¹⁶ The obvious leader of the group was Mario Carrascalao, a forestry engineer and coffee-plantation owner. Two other senior members, Lopez da Cruz and Domingos d'Oliveira were custom officials. Both da Cruz and Carrascalao were formerly representatives of the only political party allowed in East Timor.¹⁷

Just as the UDT combined the rural elites, so too did a second party, the *Associacao Social Democratica Timorese* (ASDT) or Association of Timorese Social Democratic, but it did so in a rather different way, comprised mostly of the newly

¹⁴ Richard W. Franke, *East Timor, Indonesia and the West* (1980) paper presented at the international conference on East Timor, Indonesia and the West, Amsterdam, 27-28 September. p.3.

¹⁵ Gary E. Hansen, "Indonesia 1975: National Resistance and Continuity of the New Order Struggle", *Asian Survey* (1976) vol.16, no.2, A Survey of Asia in 1975: Part II, Feb., p. 149.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 150.

¹⁷ Ramos-Horta, Jose, *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (New Jersey,1985) p. 29.

recruited members of the urban elites. The ASDT's first manifesto, published on 22 May, called for the right for independence, rejection of colonialism, the immediate participation of 'worthy Timorese elements' in the administration and local government, an end to racial discrimination, a struggle against corruption and a policy of good neighbourliness and co-operation with countries of the region.¹⁸ Included among the founders were Nicolau Lobato (later to be Prime Minister of Democratic Republic of East Timor), Mari Alkatiri, Jose Ramos-Horta and Justine Mota, all members of clandestine anti colonialist group, which met in a Dili park prior to 25 April. Francisco Xavier do Amaral, later to become a leader of the movement, was not present in the meeting, but was identified with the group a few days later. Most of ASDT's founders lived in Dili, although they retained the ties with their rural areas of origin, and several of them were from *liurai* families. In September the ASDT changed its name to Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor, FRETILIN). The leadership were impressed with and influenced by the African nationalist movements was obvious choice from the choice, in its similarity to FRELIMO.¹⁹

Meanwhile, a third political party had been formed. Its title directly expressed its aims: "the Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia". For popular consumption, following its founding meeting, it changed its names to the Timorese Popular Democratic Association or APODETI. Its manifesto called for: "An autonomous integration into the Republic of Indonesia in accordance with International law", and "the teaching of the Indonesian language as a compulsory subject".²⁰ It promised human rights, freedom, a just income distribution, free education, free medical facilities and the right to strike. APODETI's most important leaders were Guilherme Gonclaves, a *liurai*

¹⁸ Drew Cottle and Helen Masterman-Smith, *Funu: The politics of East Timor resistance* (2002) refereed paper presented to the Jubilee conference of the Australian Political Studies Association, ANU, Canberra, October.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Mainifesto of Associacao Popular Democratic Timorense, Dili, 27 May, 1974, Presented as an appendix by Jill Jolliffe. 27 May, 1974.

from the border area, Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, a southern-based cattle-rancher, and Osario Soares, a Schoolteacher and administrative official.²¹

Three further parties were created hurriedly, but they had little impact: the *Klibur Oan Timur Aswain* (KOTA) ('Sons of the Mountain Warriors') traced its roots to Toasses, and wished the position of *liurais* who could trace their ancestry to the topassé period; the *Partido Trabalhista* (Labour Party), which like the KOTA party had no programme, had eight members, all of whom comprised one family; and the *Associao Democratica Integracao Timor-Leste Australia* (ADLITA) collected money in return for promises of integration with Australia, but declined rapidly when the Australian government rejected the idea at the end of 1974. None of these parties ever had more than a handful of members and played no part during decolonisation.²²

By end of May 1974, three main political parties emerged in Portuguese Timor and by June, Lisbon forwarded three options for the future of the colony along the lines of the political manifestos of the three parties, integration with Portugal as put forward by the UDT, independence as forwarded by the FRETILIN and integration with Indonesia as proposed by APODETI.²³

After the administration's announcement of the three options, Jose Ramos-Horta travelled to Jakarta. He was well received by John Naro the Deputy President of Indonesia and the Foreign Minister, Adam Malik. He sought assurances from the Indonesian government that they would respect the right of the Timorese to organize around the independence principle, given assurance that ASDT intended to pursue a policy of non-alignment and regional co-operation. He came away with a document of moment in East Timor's history – a letter from the Foreign Minister Adam Malik guaranteeing the integrity of a future East Timor. It stated:

The Government of Indonesia [until] now still adheres to the following principles:

²¹ Taylor, n.4, p. 28

²² Ibid., p. 28.

²³ James Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed* (Sydney, 1996) p. 82.

- I. The independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people of Timor.
- II. The Government as well as the people of Indonesia have no intention to increase or to expand their territory, or to occupy other territories other [than] what is stipulated in their Constitution. This reiteration is to give you a clear idea, so that there may be no doubt in the minds of the people of Timor in [expressing] their own wishes.
- III. For this reason, whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence, can be assured that the government of Indonesia will strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both the countries.²⁴

In June a team from Australia's Foreign Affairs Department visited East Timor to investigate the changed situation. It included Mr. James Dunn, the Australian consul in Deli from 1962 to 1964, who had retained his links with the territory. On his return he reported that the Portuguese had in mind a plebiscite to be conducted to determine which of the three options the East Timorese would favour. Of these choices, he commented:

"The option of integration with Indonesia, the objective of APODETI, has very little support in Timor and it seems inconceivable that the Timorese would freely choose this solution to their future. Indeed, it is something of a concession to Indonesian apprehensions at the implications of a change in the status of the territory that integration with Indonesia is being offered as an option".

Speaking of possible Australian attitudes, he continued:

"It may seem tempting to pander to those influential elements within Indonesia, who may wish to incorporate Portuguese Timor, in order to avoid the risk of endangering our present good relations with Jakarta. In the long term, however, this policy seems unlikely to serve Australian interests in the region. We could well lose respect in other South East Asian capitals, particularly in Port Moresby, and further, we might find ourselves encouraging a dangerous trend in Indonesian politics, with implications inimical to regional security".²⁵

Meanwhile, Horta was planning to visit Australia, but throughout July he was refused meetings with both the Minister and the head of Southeast Asia Department. Despite many requests from parliamentarians, the church and academics, the government refused to make other than confused, disclaiming and uninterested statements; it had no knowledge of the situation, and it was beyond its concern. Horta was advised to focus on Indonesia and Australia. However Horta arrived in Darwin in July 1974. Jim Dunn, a

²⁴ Ramos-Horta, n.17, p.43.

²⁵ Dunn, n.23, p. 18.

former Australian Consul in East Timor, gave him shelter and introduced him to Australian politicians and academicians. Horta met Andrew Peacock, one of Australia's most talked about politician. He said:

“So far as Portuguese Timor is concerned, we would prefer to see Portugal remain in control and assist with a programme for self-determination. It would then be up to the Timorese to determine their own future in a programme that they can work out”.²⁶

Whitlam kept a firm hold on the party and brushed aside criticisms or innovative approaches to the Timor issue. The Labour MP's who did not agree with Whitlam's decisions on Timor policy grew in number; however, they could not muster enough clout to challenge their leader backed by the powerful pro-Indonesia lobby in the Foreign Affairs Department. As the Timor issue became more popular in Australia, Whitlam became more virulently anti-FRETILIN. Of Timorese leaders, he had this to say:

“Political parties emerged there for the first time in May 1974...They were led by mestizos...who seemed to be desperate to succeed the Portuguese rulers of the rest of the population”.

And on another occasion:

“I myself hesitate to accept at face value the claims of the political personalities who have emerged in the first year of political activity in Timor. They have sprung from what appears to have been a political vacuum under the Portuguese. Most appear to represent a small elite class-the educated, the government officials, and various other westernised elements.”²⁷

In September 1974, Whitlam and Suharto met in Wonosobo, 60 kms from the Indonesian city of Jogjakarta. During their discussions in Wonosobo, Suharto tentatively raised the subject of East Timor and was staggered by Whitlam's resolute answer. The Australian prime minister was fully briefed, personally involved and disarmingly forthright: “An independent East Timor would be an unviable state, and a potential threat to the area”,²⁸ he said. He offered Australia's services in making a joint approach with Indonesia to Portugal, urging integration. At the end of the meeting, the foreign affairs department published a brief paper, which stated:

²⁶ Ramos-Horta, n.17, p. 77.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 77.

²⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1974.

“Australia appreciates Indonesia’s concern about the future of the territory and shares its belief that the voluntary union of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia, on the basis of an internationally acceptable act of self determination, would seem to serve objective of decolonisation, and at the same time the interests of stability in the region”.²⁹

Indonesia, the fifth most populous country in the world, endowed with vast reserves of oil and other minerals became an obsession for Whitlam in his quest for a more visible role for Australia in the region’s affairs. In the face of Japan’s highly visible and competitive presence in Southeast Asia, it seemed only rational that Australia should launch a more aggressive diplomacy strategy in the region. Gough Whitlam did what is common in Asia, Africa, and even Europe; he befriended the regional strongman – in this case, Suharto. By the time he was confronted with the Timor issue in 1974-75, he had already cemented Australia’s new relations with Indonesia through his diplomacy. The Wonosobo meeting did not have much impact on the political parties of East Timor. They were busy consolidating their programmes and consolidating their support.

Meanwhile, Colonel Alves Aldeia who was the governor of East Timor at the time of the Portuguese coup was discharged from his office in only three months after the coup. Colonel Niveo Herdade, who had served as an aide to Spínola in Guinea-Bissau, replaced him. Herdade arrived in Dili with a mandate to insure that East Timor did not follow the path of Angola and Mozambique. He was to insure that East Timor remained with Portugal as an ‘Associated Territory’ or a ‘Federal State’. Having lost Angola and Mozambique, Spínola was determined to keep East Timor and Sao Tome.³⁰ However, by September 1974, Spínola had been ousted. “If he had not been ousted, you would have been in trouble. Spínola had a real dislike of FRETILIN,”³¹ Major Jonatas, a leading MFA officer who was appointed in 1974 to help oversee the decolonisation process of East Timor, told to Jose Ramos-Horta. Herdade didn’t last long. In a few months of his stay in East Timor, he managed to antagonize everybody with his dictatorial manner and ultra-conservative views. Lisbon finally picked Colonel Lemos Pires, a liberal, decent

²⁹ *The Future of Portuguese Timor*, Document BP/60, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 11 September 1974.

³⁰ Ramos-Horta, n.17, p. 46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

and bright officer who had served in Guinea-Bissau, who came to East Timor in November 1974.

OPSUS³² studies concluded that since an independent East Timor could pose a threat to the eastern Indonesia, the military would prefer to incorporate the island into the republic if the Portuguese rule became unstable. During the 1960s BAKIN had built up an information network in East Timor, which worked through traders, custom officials and agents in Dili's Indonesian consulates. Even before the Lisbon coup, BAKIN had already trained a number of pro-APODETI East Timorese in radio broadcasting and interpretation. APODETI was very much an Indonesian creation. Even as late as April 1974, on the eve of the coup that was to overthrow the Caetano regime; Indonesian policy remained one of 'non-interference' in Portuguese Timor.³³

Meanwhile, the Portuguese attitude towards East Timor ranged from condescending paternalism to outright disrespect for the rights of the people of East Timor to self-determination. From early 1974, the preference in Lisbon was for handing over the country and its people to Indonesia, bawaring in mind only the Portuguese image.³⁴ Though the Portuguese were fully aware of Indonesia's campaign to destabilize the country, the Portuguese diplomacy failed to draw United Nations into the affair. The Special Committee on Decolonisation (committee of 24), which usually undertakes fact-finding missions to 'Non-Self Governing Territories', was not asked to visit East Timor.

Another major development during this period was the Malik-Soares meeting. An understanding seems to have emerged where Portugal was persuaded not to discourage support for the territory's integration with Indonesia. This led General Ali Murtopo, the leading player on Timor in Indonesia to declare that the understanding between the two

³² OPSUS was originally a special intelligence unit of the army's Strategic Reserve Command (KOSTRAD), of which Suharto was commander before the 1965 coup. It played a behind-the-scenes role in settling the dispute with Malaysia in 1964 and after the coup became a special operations unit for President Suharto. It has been involved in the rigging of elections, the organizing of protests and mobilizing of mass movements. Most notably, it masterminded the 'Act of Free Choice' in West Papua New Guinea (West Irian) under the auspices of the UN.

³³ Hansen, n.15, p.151.

³⁴ Ramos-Horta, n.17, p. 57

foreign ministers represented a move stemming from the recent official statement by the Government of Portugal that it had no objections to the possibility of the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. Thus, some kind of an understanding with Portugal seemed to have been reached.³⁵ An important consequence of the change in Lisbon and the accompanying new policy towards East Timor was that the hands of the key military leaders in Indonesia, Pangabbean, Ali Murtopo, Yoga Sugama and Benni Murdani, in favour of a more aggressive policy towards the colony, were greatly strengthened. In October 1974, President Suharto authorised Ali Murtopo to handle all negotiations with Portugal on East Timor. This also marked the launch of *Operasi Komodo*, the brainchild of Ali Murtopo.³⁶

In January 1975 concerned by the Indonesia's swift away from the acceptance of East Timorese independence, the UDT and FRETILIN formed a coalition as the national basis for a national transitional government to oversee the territory's passage to independence. From March local elections were held in several areas, supervised by the Decolonisation commission. But it led to open clashes between the supporters of UDT and FRETILIN even though they were formally in coalition. This indicated that much competition and tensions existed between the two parties despite the two being aligned formally in a united front. It also indicated that the Timorese society was not prepared for open political competition.

Indonesia had some other plans by then. The *Operasi Komodo* group undertook a change in strategy by focussing its attention on all the middle-of-the-road parties, including the UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista. The object was to create an anti-communist front in order to isolate FRETILIN.³⁷ The clash between UDT and FRETILIN confirmed the thinking in the *Operasi Komodo* group that while APODETI was a lost cause; all the energies should be focussed on winning over the UDT, so that the coalition could be split. This meant that if their plan were successful, UDT and APODETI would be on their side. Against this backdrop, in early April 1974, President Suharto met Gough

³⁵ Bilveer Singh, *East Timor, Indonesia and the World, Myths and Realities* (Singapore, 1995) pp. 30-31.

³⁶ Taylor, n.4, p. 31.

³⁷ Singh, n.35, p. 38.

Whitlam in Townsville (Australia) and after the meeting told the press that Indonesia “does not have territorial ambitions, let alone plans to include the territory of Portuguese Timor with the territory of the Republic of Indonesia”.³⁸

On 7 May, the first phase of decolonisation talks sponsored by the Portuguese government was held in Dili. While the UDT and FRETILIN attended, the APODETI refused to participate and met the Portuguese officials separately. On 27 May, UDT leaders announced that they were leaving the coalition. Their communiqué claimed: “FRETILIN has adopted a political line which could seriously jeopardize the independence of Timor-Dili in so far as it engenders the internal security and political stability of the geopolitical context of which we are part”.³⁹ At the end of May, the Lisbon Decolonisation commission announced publicly what had been under discussion in Dili for some time – that a further conference on decolonisation would be held in Macao in mid-June, with representatives from all the Timorese parties, the AFM and the Portuguese Government. The object of the conference was to discuss at a government level the agreements already reached in Dili. To the administrations considerable surprise, FRETILIN declined to attend the conference, as the Indonesian Government was allowed to send observers to the talk, and also because its leaders regarded decolonisation as a process that should be led from within East Timor itself, rather than by Lisbon, and because the movement objected the inclusion of APODETI in the negotiations. However on 12 June 1975 Deputy President of the Indonesian parliament, John Naro, argued in the parliament that Indonesia should; “work out a special policy on Portuguese Timor so that finally the area will once again return to Indonesian control”.⁴⁰ and the Lisbon Government declared that the conference would go ahead without the colony’s largest pro-independence party.

The result of FRETILIN’s absence from Macao readily became as the summit went got underway on 26 June. APODETI was able to present itself internationally as a viable party; free to criticize FRETILIN in an international arena; and the Indonesians

³⁸ Taylor, n.4, p. 39.

³⁹ Dunn, n.23, p. 119.

⁴⁰ Taylor, n.4, p. 48.

were able to make political capital out of FRETILIN's intransigence. A communiqué was issued on 28 June referred to self-determination and not independence as a right, and the framework put forward by the Decolonisation Commission in Dili was qualified in order to restrict the democratic process in the period up to the Popular Assembly elections in October 1976.⁴¹

Komodo operatives now did all they could to confirm the worst suspicions of UDT leaders. In July, they implanted rumours of a planned FRETILIN coup and of arms entering East Timor from China. Increasingly alarmed that a 'radicalised' FRETILIN would provoke Indonesian intervention, and particularly so after Suharto's 'non-viability' statement. UDT's leaders requested a meeting with Ali Murtopo to clarify Indonesia's position. Murtopo took a hard line, arguing that FRETILIN was now a communist movement. That it was planning a coup in the middle of August and that, if it succeeded, Indonesia would intervene, but they were assured that if they could prevent the left wing regime from coming to power in East Timor then the Indonesian Government would support them.

On arriving back in Dili on 6 August, the UDT leaders encountered the rumours that FRETILIN troops, describing themselves as communists, were manning roadblocks in the countryside. Joao Carrascalao, one of the UDT leaders confided his thoughts to an AFM officer, Major Bassento, who later claimed that:

"He had been deeply influenced by what he had been told in Indonesia...he told me they were convinced there would be no independence for East Timor under FRETILIN and they were doubtful there would be independence under UDT...They were very conscious of the need not to offend Indonesia. Carrascalao was also convinced that a communist influenced East Timor could not survive next to Indonesia".⁴²

On 9 and 10 August, UDT members organised demonstrations calling for the expulsion of 'communists' from the country. As reports began to reach Dili of killing of FRETILIN members in the same area, armed UDT supporters came out on to the streets of Dili. By the morning of 11 August, they had occupied the police headquarters, seized

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 49.

⁴² Jill, n.1, pp. 117-118.

key installations in Dili, including the radio station, airport, and some administrative buildings, and demanded immediate independence for East Timor and imprisonment of FRETILIN members. By August 13 the Portuguese government, after an initial denial, reported fighting in Timor⁴³. Some news reports said 100 people had been killed and 300 Portuguese women and children had been evacuated on a Portuguese freighter. Portuguese authorities rejected UDT's ultimatum, and by August 22 FRETILIN's counter-offensive had taken an ordinance depot and army headquarters in Dili. Portuguese forces virtually collapsed, and all Timorese members deserted to join the warring factions, most apparently joining FRETILIN.

Carrascalao claimed that the aim of the UDT coup was to rid East Timor of the communists, but Indonesia did not immediately come to UDT's aid since it did not yet want to appear to be involved, and UDT's military situation rapidly deteriorated. After a five-day battle, in which refugees said that about 200 persons were killed, FRETILIN gained complete control of Dili. It was reported that Indonesian President Suharto "asked Portugal for assurances that Lisbon won't oppose Indonesian takeover of Timor."⁴⁴ In words to be often paraphrased by other Indonesian officials, Murtopo told reporters in Jakarta "we do not want to be a naughty boy in this case. We are willing to help to bring about peace there, but I can assure you that we will not use force to settle the problem. But neither does Indonesia want to sacrifice its stability over the issue. In fact, it is a simple problem: the people there belong to the same clan as those on Indonesia islands around Timor."⁴⁵

Meanwhile fighting increased throughout East Timor, and hundreds of refugees concentrated in Dili's port zone, still tenuously held by Portuguese authorities. Although the Portuguese called upon the International Red Cross, Australia, and Macao to help with evacuation efforts, little could be done to ease the suffering of the people. On August 27, 1975, Pires and his remaining garrison withdrew to the island of Atauro, and for all practical purposes Portuguese control of Timor had ended after some 450 years.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

⁴⁴ *The Melbourne Age*, 26 August 1975.

⁴⁵ *The Press*, Christchurch, 27 August 1975.

Indonesia offered to move in and restore order, but on September 1 Portugal rejected this proposal. The month of September saw a high level of diplomatic activity, but decisions could not be made as Portugal was undergoing a cabinet crisis. In October UDT and APODETI, along with KOTA and Trabalhista and under the tutelage of Indonesia, joined together in a coalition called Movimento Anti-Comunista (MAC, Anti-Communist Movement) and announced their program—from Indonesian territory.⁴⁶

Meanwhile FRETILIN, seemingly in effective control of most of East Timor, set up a “transitional administration” and Indonesia complained of FRETILIN attacks on Indonesian Timor border villages. Indonesia's Foreign Minister Adam Malik and Malaysia's Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak began issuing statements about Timor's becoming a base for communist subversion. By the middle of October there were reports of bombardments from Indonesian warships at Balibo, Baucau, the second largest town in East Timor, and at Atabae. However, MAC forces, heavily supported by Indonesian troops, had difficulty moving under these barrages. Citing the lack of legal order from Portugal and the Indonesian bombardments (which resulted in the loss of Atabae to MAC), FRETILIN announced on November 28, 1975, the independence of East Timor from Portugal and renamed the territory the Republica Democrática de Timor Leste (Democratic Republic of East Timor). The new regime was denounced in Lisbon but recognized as a government by Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Sao-Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, Guinea, and Albania. China, Vietnam, and Angola all recognized FRETILIN as the representative party of the East Timorese people.⁴⁷

One day after FRETILIN declared independence MAC declared East Timor a part of Indonesia. On December 1, 1975, Malik said that the solution to the Timor question now “lay on the field of battle.” The full-scale invasion of Dili, by sea and air, accompanying an advance from Atabae, was actually planned for the beginning of December but, at the last minute, it was called off. Aid workers, journalists and FRETILIN members who had all left Dili by 4 December were somewhat surprised as

⁴⁶ Robert Lawless, *The Indonesian Takeover of East Timor*, p. 953

⁴⁷ Ibid.

they waited for news in Atauro and Darwin. The reason for the delay, as usual, came from the CIA: 'According to a reliable source, Indonesia will not initiate large-scale military action against Portuguese Timor until after President Ford completes his visit (to Jakarta) on December 7th,⁴⁸. Clearly Ford, accompanied by Kissinger on a visit which the US State Department dubbed 'the big wink', might have found the need to go public somewhat embarrassing.

And on December 7 Jakarta radio reported that Dili had been "liberated" by the "people's resistance spearheaded by the APODETI, UDT, KOTA and Trabalhista" and "supported by Indonesian volunteers." The Indonesian government claimed to have found it difficult to "prevent these volunteers from supporting their brothers in liberating Dili from oppression and FRETILIN's terror."⁴⁹ On the same day Portugal broke off diplomatic relations with Indonesia, accusing Jakarta of military aggression against East Timor.

In a letter dated December 7 Portugal informed the UN of the invasion and said, "In the present circumstances, Portugal is unable to restore peace in Timor or to ensure that the de colonization process is accomplished through peaceful and negotiated means"⁵⁰ and urged a meeting of the Security Council. Discussions in the 13th Session of the Fourth Committee of the UN held on December 10 indicate that Indonesia tended to place blame on Portugal for not discharging its obligations as administering power, for withdrawing to Atauro, and for leaving firearms to certain political parties, claiming that only Indonesia was there to ease the terror and famine and restore order.

As a result of the December 7 Portuguese letter the UN Security Council met five times between December 15 and 22. In these debates Anwar Sani of Indonesia emphasized that when fighting broke out in East Timor, Portugal was unable to restore order, that local parties asked for Indonesian help (claiming that APODETI, KOTA, UDT, and Trabalhista—i.e., MAC—represented the majority of the people), that over

⁴⁸ *Ford, Kissinger and the Indonesian Invasion, 1975-76*, <http://www.pcug.org.au/~wildwood/01decford.htm>

⁴⁹ *Summary of World Broadcasts*, BBC, 4 December 1975.

⁵⁰ *U.N. Chronicle*, January 1976, pp. 6-14.

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50,000 refugees had poured into Indonesian Timor, and that the potential of a prolonged civil war in East Timor would invite outside interference. However, on December 22, 1975, the Security Council called on Indonesia to withdraw troops from East Timor and requested that a Special Representative of the Secretary-General be sent to assess the situation. Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, the Under-Secretary-General and Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, was appointed and arrived in Jakarta on January 15, 1976, on route to Timor.⁵¹

Throughout the rest of December and the first half of 1976 East Timor was a battleground. Reliable sources on the war are not immediately available. Indonesian reports are infrequent and not detailed. They usually claim complete control of the entire island and downplay the FRETILIN resistance as a rag tail group of a few hundred soldiers. One would suspect, however, that the stout resistance of FRETILIN surprised Indonesia and considerably disappointed that MAC forces were not able to take over the territory with only token Indonesian help. The ferocity of the initial Indonesian onslaught in Dili suggests that they had hoped for a quick knockout. In fact, they had to stage a second invasion on December 25.

After their initial plans failed to materialize, Indonesia and MAC moved quickly on political and military fronts. Oe-Ocussi Ambeno was officially incorporated into Indonesia in a ceremony in the Indonesian Timor capital of Kupang on December 15, 1975. On December 17 MAC named Araujo of APODETI as the Chief Executive Officer with a full mandate to govern the newly created Provisional Government of East Timor. In early January he presided over a ceremony on Atauro Island lowering the Portuguese flag and raising the red and white flag of Indonesia. Speaking in Baucau on January 8, 1976, Araujo declared that the future of East Timor lay with Indonesia. The next day Malik left Jakarta for a brief visit to Dili. And a week later Malik also declared that since the Provisional Government of East Timor had invited Indonesia to declare its sovereignty over the territory, there was no longer any need for an election to decide the future of East Timor. Malik said integration could be done simply by a presidential



⁵¹ Franke, n.14, p.5



decision, a special session of the Indonesian Parliament, or by a people's consultative assembly.⁵²

In late January the Provisional Government of East Timor dissolved the existing political parties, and merged them into an organization apparently called the Functional Corps of the Provisional Government. And in a letter that took effect on February 1, 1976, Araujo officially banned the formation of all political parties, thus ending the only period in modern history—about 20 months—when East Timor had experienced free political activity. Indonesia launched a major offensive in late December 1975 with 15,000 to 20,000 troops from Java. They took Baucau in the north and attacked Liquica to the west of Dili. On December 29 FRETILIN announced that Aileu, a FRETILIN stronghold south of Dili, had fallen to Indonesian troops. According to Horta, the FRETILIN government then established headquarters in the mountain town of Ainaro. Australian intelligence analysts report that more than 450 Indonesian troops were killed in the first four weeks of the Indonesian invasion, and that the 15,000 to 20,000 Indonesian forces failed to subdue large areas of East Timor or to find and destroy the 3,000 or so Fretilin troops.⁵³

Throughout these activities a minor sideshow in the person of UN Special Representative Winspeare entertained the international legal community on the periphery of the action. In late January, under tight security, Winspeare visited towns in East Timor that the Indonesians had held for several months, such as Dili and Manatuto. FRETILIN was anxious to have Winspeare visit its territories, but the Australian government first seized the FRETILIN radio transmitter in Darwin, making communications difficult, and then refused on the grounds of safety to fly Winspeare to FRETILIN-held territories of East Timor, though FRETILIN then held four airstrips in Con on the northwest coast, and in Same, Suai, and Viqueque.

⁵² Lawless, n.46, p. 954

⁵³ Ramos-Horta, n.17, p.52.

The pro-Indonesian Provisional Government of East Timor also refused to guarantee the UN envoy's safety to FRETILIN territories. The Portuguese—still in the eyes of the UN the legal administrative authority in East Timor—had offered two corvettes, the Oliveira de Camo and the Joao Roby, along with a radio transmitter to make contact with FRETILIN, but Malik warned that any ship carrying the UN envoy risked being sunk if it attempted to enter disputed areas of East Timor. In fact, Indonesia immediately bombarded all areas suggested by FRETILIN as landing places for Winspeare.

Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Andrew Peacock said that he deeply regretted that Winspeare had been unable to talk with FRETILIN in their territories of East Timor, but claimed the mission was a success since Winspeare had met with Horta in Darwin. Answering questions at the Press Club in Canberra during a three-day visit to Australia ending February 11, UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim said that the UN had been presented with a “fait accompli” in East Timor. And in early March 1976 Winspeare returned to Geneva, and the remainder of the UN mission to New York City.⁵⁴

On the political front the Indonesian-sponsored Provisional Government of East Timor invited the 23 embassies in Jakarta to send observers to a Peoples Assembly held in Dili on May 31. Only seven embassies accepted—New Zealand, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria—and the absence of the United States, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Papua New Guinea would have been embarrassing for Indonesia. A June 1, 1976 report in the *Washington Post* expressed skepticism about the authenticity of the Peoples Assembly and said that the diplomats and journalists were allowed only three hours in East Timor and could not meet any of the 28 representatives to the Assembly—which voted unanimously to request integration with Indonesia.

On 17 July 1976, Indonesian president Suharto promulgated Law 7/76 providing for the integration of East Timor into Indonesia as its 27th province. Until that point,

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.121.

Indonesia had no historical claim over East Timor, which had not part of the Dutch East Indies. Until October 1999, Indonesia maintained the official position that by the act of the Assembly, the people of East Timor exercised their right to self-determination and had become independent through integration with Indonesia. The UN neither recognized the authority of the Assembly nor endorsed its decision concerning the status of the Territory. Portugal never relinquished its authority as administering Power of the Territory, even though it informed the UN year after year that conditions prevailing in East Timor prevented it from assuming responsibilities for the administration of the Territory.

The Australian government and some trade unions differed widely in their views of events in East Timor. The Labor government under former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and the caretaker and the new conservative government installed in December, both under Peacock, have avoided antagonizing their large neighbor to the north. Australia's timidity could be understood since Indonesia could have conceivably easily harassed Australia by banning Australian aircraft from Indonesian airspace. Instead Timorese movements, especially FRETILIN, stirred up Australian interest and support, partly by reminding Australians that the Timorese had been instrumental in stopping the Japanese just short of invading Darwin in World War II.

The Australian press headlined the government's timidity in dealing with Indonesia along with graphic stories of the brutality of Javanese troops in East Timor. Indeed, casualties among Australian journalists themselves were high. It has been reported that the five Australian journalists killed in October 1975 in Balibo, were executed by the UDT or by Indonesians after they had obtained evidence of Jakarta's direct involvement. They were reported as accidentally killed; the bodies were burnt beyond recognition and were handed over to the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. The Australian government did not pursue the matter. In contrast some Australian trade unions supported FRETILIN and opposed Indonesian moves.

Similarly, Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant have written:

“...the strongest negative Australian reaction was to the Indonesian takeover of East Timor in 1975, when the military moved with less than decent haste to take the place of the hastily departed Portuguese colonialists, with five Australian journalists being killed in the process. There was little or nothing any Australian government could have done at the time to limit or reverse the annexation.”⁵⁵

In the UN General Assembly vote deploring Indonesian actions, Thailand and Malaysia voted with Indonesia while Singapore and Papua New Guinea abstained. Malaysia even broadcast support for the decision of Indonesia to send troops to East Timor. The only official support for FRETILIN came in the form of a letter of solidarity from Ton Due Thang, president of Vietnam. The only other nation in the area that could conceivably support FRETILIN was Papua New Guinea, which was having difficulties of its own, especially with secessionist movements in New Britain Island and copper-rich Bougainville Island.

The response to events in East Timor in the U.S., China, and the Soviet Union has been rather muted. China condemned Jakarta in a December 9 article in the *People's Daily*, saying, "The struggle of the people of East Timor for national liberation and independence is an integral part of the 'third world' people's struggle against colonialism, imperialism, and hegemonies." This tough stance is apparently a matter of principle since Peking has wanted to improve relations with Indonesia. Although it makes a distinction between state-to-state ties and moral support for liberation struggles, China knows how warily Southeast Asian governments view Chinese support for subversive movements. As for the Soviet Union, Pravda only expressed "concern" over the affair and support for Timorese self-determination—without openly denouncing Jakarta.

⁵⁵ Evans, Gareth and Bruce Grant (eds.), *Australia's Foreign Relations: In the World of the 1990s* (Melbourne, 1995) p. 200.

CHAPTER TWO: EAST TIMOR UNDER INDONESIA

By the end of 1976, there were no fewer than 40,000 Indonesian troops in East Timor, most of who were rotated regularly. Yet, despite the size of the force, it was still making little headway. A relief worker summarised the situation, "Indonesian forces occupy the towns and villages containing about 150,000 people. But the bulk of the population and the territory are not under the direct control. Beyond the main centres safety cannot be guaranteed because of harassment by FRETILIN. Land and communication is by helicopter or by sea around the coast"¹. It seemed that apart from the elite Indonesian forces, the rest of the Indonesian forces were neither trained nor committed. Also the FRETILIN forces were well trained and knew the terrain very well. During 1976, FRETILIN managed to defend successfully the frontier zone sector in the west with only 1,800 men². The Indonesian forces occupied the main village, where they concentrated their troops, but they couldn't advance into the interior.

Faced with the military stalemates, Indonesian troops took out their frustration on the local population in their controlled areas. Amongst many such incidents was the following, reported in July, and "in the second week of June a woman escaped from an Indonesian concentration camp in Aileu. She said that the attempt to take Liquica on 7 June had resulted in heavy Indonesian casualties, including two Indonesian officers. She said the enemy forced the captured population from Astabe. Quelicai, Ermera and Aileu to take in the attack. Most of them died. The Indonesian officers were angry. They had been told FRETILIN would not offer resistance to the attack. They punished the captured female population by forcing them to do heavy work in the rice fields, completely naked, in the role of buffaloes"³. Such violent forms of retribution persuaded these and more of the population to flee Indonesian areas.

¹ M. Richardson, 'Fretilin's alive and Kicking', Melbourne Age, 8 December 1976, ,

² John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom*, (London, 1999), p.80.

³ Timor Information Service, Nos. 20/21, October 1977, Walker Press, Fitzroy, Australia, p. 17.

In the outside Indonesian control FRETILIN maintained its administrative role, caring for the welfare of the Timorese population and organising the defence of villages against Indonesian incursions. A priest, who lived in the central eastern zone until his surrender in March 1979, gave a general description, "FRETILIN built up a line of defence around the village perimeter and warned the population prior to an Indonesian attack. The civilian population then moved to the mountains, leaving the villages empty. The food situation in the mountain areas was satisfactory until the mid-1977. New crops were sown and harvested. FRETILIN set up their own administrative divisions. Schools functioned in each zone. FRETILIN formed a health service with medical workers. They manufactured pills, liquid medicines and antibiotics, using medical plants⁴.

With regard to the political organisation, priest who lived in Soibada until early 1979 described a system, which, although a shadow of the pre-invasion period, still retained its essential participatory democratic features, "There are political commissioners, and each commissioner had assistants. Many times they held meetings with the people for political clarification on the evolution of the struggle...there is a political education school where they train political assistants. There were other types of meetings of the people with the political assistants and sometimes without them, to programme the way of life and solve all the problems of the camps, from latrines to housing the pigs and other animals...that is how things worked. They were conscious of what they were fighting for – independence. If they hadn't cared, then everything would have been finished. That meant the population was able to organize things easily"⁵.

The defence of the camps and villages in FRETILIN areas was simple, yet successful. Indonesians bombarded the fields in the populated areas in 1976. Subjected to their continued bombardment, the people moved into the mountainous areas, where FRETILIN organized them into encampments in zones where they could be protected. Since these zones were still subjected to bombing, the population was placed in this

⁴ *Interview with Timorese refugee*, Father Luis, Lisbon, 19 February 1985, as cited in John G. Taylor, p. 81.

⁵ *Interview with Father Leoneto de Rego*, Lisbon, published in translation in S.E. Asia Record, Vol. 1, No. 30.

central area, with FRETILIN troops controlling the periphery, periodically attacking Indonesian areas to capture weapons and gain more strategic positions.

By the end of the wet season in April 1977, the Indonesian military faced an all too apparent stalemate. With no advances on the ground for six months and with the brutalities enacted by the frustrated troops producing a stream of increasingly adverse international publicity, rapid action was needed. The government mobilised on two fronts; it tried to organize more favourable publicity and, perhaps most importantly, it tried to improve its fighting capacity to prepare for a more systematic, extensive campaign against FRETILIN held zones. In both these areas, the support provided by the governments of the industrialized countries was to prove indispensable.

On the publicity front, Indonesian officials reacted angrily and aggressively to refugee reports. Malik asked: "Fifty thousand people or perhaps 80,000 people might have been killed during the war in East Timor. So what? It was war... Then what is the big fuss?"⁶ Moves were made to minimize the effects of the most influential refugee accounts, based on J.S. Dunn's interviews. The US government proved very cooperative, agreeing to reduce its influence. Dunn was scheduled originally to appear before the Congressional Sub-Committee on International Organization. However, under pressure from both the American State Department and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, it was decided to include the Asian Pacific Sub-Committee in the hearing, since this committee's concern was to foster the relationship between the United States and Indonesia, to whom most of its members were very sympathetic. Dunn's testimony was thus less successful than might otherwise have been the case. Dunn himself was subjected to extremely aggressive and hostile questioning.⁷

A foreign delegation that visited East Timor in 1977 contained some rather more discerning members, notably Australian journalist Richard Carleton. Evading his Indonesian escorts, Carleton managed to obtain eyewitness accounts of the wharf killings

⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 April 1977.

⁷ James Dunn, "The Darkest Page", *New Internationalist*, Issue 253, March 1994

and visited the site of the October 1975 murder of the Australian and British journalists. His commentary subverted the objectives of Indonesian design:

“The helicopters supplied to transport me were under instruction to fly above 3000 feet, beyond the range of small-arms fire.... Everywhere the Indonesians took me they had three guards always within earshot and two concentric circles of ‘civil defence’ troops surrounding me. For my television cameras, I tried to recreate the events surrounding their (the journalists) deaths. Apparently my presentation was too graphic for the authorities. We were flown out with the excuse that the blue skies looked threatening... In Fatomaca and Lospalos I heard some small-arms fire, but my Indonesian escorts were quick to point out that this was the local people hunting.”⁸

From September 1977 intense military actions were conducted by ABRI against the resistance, resulting in a very much-weakened FRETILIN, especially in 1978. This was, in part of the new ABRI Commander, General Yusuf, bent on resolving the military threat in East Timor as quickly as possible. The intensification of the military campaign was also brought about by rising international criticisms against Indonesia's action with Indonesian military leaders believing that an offensive crushing would put an end to the political pressure from without.

In view of this, in September 1977, a full-scale military campaign was launched against the FRETILIN following the much publicised offer of amnesty by President Suharto on 17 August to the FRETILIN troops and its supporters with this offer valid until 31 December 1977. In February, the Malaysian government provided the Indonesian military with four ex-Royal Australian Air force Sabre jets as a source of spare parts for its own Sabres. In the early months of 1977, the Indonesian navy ordered missile-firing patrol-boats from the Netherlands, Taiwan, South Korea, the United States and Australia to replace its ageing Soviet vessels, together with submarines from West Germany. The aim of this rapid procurements was clear –to reinforce the naval blockade of East Timor, and to enhance aerial capability to strafe and bomb FRETILIN areas. In February, it was reported that the Indonesian air force had received thirteen Bronco OV-10F aircraft from the Rockwell International Corporation, with the aid of an official US government foreign military sales credit. The Bronco was ideally suited for use in East Timor,

⁸ Richard Carlton, ‘Brainwash Follows the Bloodbath’, *Observer*, London, 31 July 1977.

designed particularly for counter-insurgency operations in difficult terrain under varying climatic conditions.⁹

Beginning in September 1977, attacks were launched against FRETILIN areas in the western, central and southern areas of East Timor. Saturation bombing by Bronco jets aimed to prepare these areas for military advances. Most notably, forested areas were bombed in an attempt to defoliate ground cover and chemical sprays were used to destroy crops and livestock. Many of the captured population were herded into camps, whilst others were deported to the offshore island of Atauro. In coastal zones, aerial bombardment was accompanied by the use of naval artillery. In October, Catholic sources in East Timor reported that the key objectives of the military campaign were “encirclement” and “annihilation”, a surrounding of the population in an area, followed by their transportation to newly-created strategic camps and the killing of FRETILIN members and sympathizers. In one action in early 1978, for example, the entire civilian population of the village of Arsabai, near the Indonesian border, was killed for supporting FRETILIN.¹⁰

Numerous campaigns were undertaken throughout East Timor. In each campaign, a similar strategy was pursued: days of heavy bombardment and strafing of villages in areas outside Indonesian control were followed by large-scale artillery attacks, culminating in the deployment of troops against villages, forcing their inhabitants into increasingly more confined areas until they were completely surrounded. After encirclement, came annihilation- executions, imprisonment, deportation to islands such as Atauro and the relocation of the population in camps away from its original village. After encirclement, Indonesian soldiers exacted terrible retributions. Elderly people were burnt alive in their houses, women and men were tied together and shot, and children were executed in front of their parents.

⁹ ‘Human Rights in East Timor and the Question of the Use of the US Equipment by the Indonesian Armed Forces’, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 23 March 1977.

¹⁰ Taylor, n.2, p. 85.

Those who survived encirclement were transported to camps located initially at the sites of former Portuguese *postos*. The Portuguese had a system of *postos*, which were the places where local officers and churches were situated. So people were driven back to these posts because it was easier for the troops to keep them under surveillance in these places. From these *posto* camps people were transported to newly created resettlement camps. The American agency, USAID, estimated that some eight months after encirclement there were 300,000 living in such camps, which were to become the foundations for the Indonesian military's attempts to restructure Timorese society during the coming years¹¹. For the moment, however, they were sites of utter despair; their inhabitants were prevented from travelling beyond the camp boundaries, and as a result they could neither cultivate nor harvest food; dependent on the military for basic medical supplies and foodstuffs, they received little or nothing and starvation became widespread. Everywhere they were subjected to a harsh military control.

Most of the population captured in the May-August encirclement campaigns in the areas south of Dili were herded into a strategic camp in Remexio, some 14 km south of the capital. In early September, the military organized a trip to Remexio for a group of selected journalists and diplomats from Australia, the United States, Japan, India, New Zealand, Bangladesh, South Korea, Egypt and Iraq- 'so they can check whether the integration of the territory into Indonesia was the wish of the East Timorese people or a mere fabrication', said Adam Malik's successor, Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumatmaadja, with the unfavourable international coverage clearly uppermost in his mind.¹² What the visitors observed, in a very short visit to a camp, which the military claimed was populated with victims of FRETILIN's policies, was typical of the conditions then prevailing in East Timor's strategic settlements.

In 1978 a heavy toll had been exacted on the FRETILIN and its military strength. As was admitted by Jose Ramos-Horta, "1978 was a disastrous year for FRETILIN"¹³.

¹¹ US Agency for International Development (USAID), 'East Timor- Indonesia- Displaced Persons', Situation Report No. 1, 9 October 1979.

¹² 'Timor Faced a Viet War', Sun (Australia), 7 September 1978.

¹³ Jose Ramos-Horta, *Funu: The Unfinished saga of East Timor*, (New Jersey, 1987) p.157.

This was because there was a serious division with the party with regard to the conduct of the war against Indonesia. While Amaral preferred to settle the problem through negotiations with the Indonesians, Lobato insisted on militarily resolving the problem. As Lobato was able to dominate the Central Committee, Amaral was expelled from the FRETILIN, deposed as President and charged with treason. In November Lobato became FRETILIN's generalissimo, holding both the key political and military portfolios. Indonesians also captured Radio Maubere, FRETILIN's radio link with the outside world. The final blow came on 31 December, when Nicolau Lobato was killed in the combat in Maubisse, near Turiscai, leaving the FRETILIN almost leaderless. Not surprisingly a number of governments responded, channelling aid to the strategic camps through the Indonesian Red Cross organization in late 1978 and 1979. Most of this aid never reached the camps and the situation deteriorated rapidly throughout 1979.

The period from 1979 to 1980 represented a period of general disarray in the Resistance with no clear leader coming to prominence and with no contact between FRETILIN and the outside world. By 1980, ABRI's military campaign exacted a heavy toll on the FRETILIN with many senior leaders killed or captured and its supply lines disturbed by the encirclement strategy. Between 1976 and 1980, more than 100,000 East Timorese are believed to have died as a result of military action, illness or starvation. A new phase began with the election of Xanana Gusmao as the Chairman of Revolutionary Council for National Resistance.

Between July and September 1981, ABRI launched a new military campaign, *Operasi Keamanan* or Operation Security against the Resistance. The new thing in this campaign was the employment of the local population in a "fence of legs" (*Pagar Betis*) strategy, forcing the Timorese to walk ahead of the troops advancing on FRETILIN's positions. This forced the FRETILIN fighters either to hold their fire or shoot on their own people. An important consequence of this strategy was that agricultural activities were badly hurt as it took away manpower for many months. Following this operation, ABRI claimed that it had recovered large quantities of weapons from the FRETILIN. For instance, it was maintained in March 1982 that more than 13,228 weapons had been

recovered by this time, including 6,000 mauser rifles, 5,000 G3 rifles, 3,500 hand grenades, 2817 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, 857 mitrailleur pistols, 214 machine guns, 17 canons and 4 tonnes of explosives.¹⁴

On 8 August 1982, about 50 ABRI locally recruited Civil Guards or HANSIP murdered 15 Indonesian soldiers of an engineering unit and fled to the mountains¹⁵. Despite ABRI's declared policy of wiping out the FRETILIN fighters, on 23 March 1983, a ceasefire agreement was signed between Colonel Purwanto, the Commander of the Indonesian forces in East Timor and Xanana Gusmao, the leader of the Resistance at Larigatu. This held for nearly five months, indicating that ABRI did give some recognition to the FRETILIN, with some observers believing that ABRI was suffering from war-weariness and that there was a need to work out an agreement that would reduce the level of fighting in the province.

The Role of ICRC and CRS

During the entire campaign there were tremendous food shortages. As news of the scale of the food shortages seeped out, the military was forced to take some action to avoid further adverse international reaction. The ICRC programme distributing food to some 34 villages and the emergency relief provided by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), both begun in late 1979, had come to an end just before the start of *Operasi Keamanan*. Once the fence of legs was finished in September, the ICRC was once again permitted entry to undertake a further evaluation survey, in areas to which they were guided by the army. The results of this survey were devastating. The ICRC concluded that there was tremendous agricultural shortfall produced by the fence of legs operation.¹⁶

Faced with this situation, agencies such as the ICRC began to try and provide aid on a more systematic basis. In this they faced the same problem they had encountered in

¹⁴ F. Hiorth, *Timor: Past and Present*, (Townsville, Queensland: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1985), Southeast Asian Monographs, No., 17, p. 28.

¹⁵ Bilveer Singh, *East Timor, Indonesia and the World, Myths and Realities* (Singapore, 1995) p. 114.

¹⁶ Taylor, n.2, p. 120.

1979-80, that much of the aid provided for the villages was simply not getting through. Refugee reports and letters described repeatedly how aid was being appropriated and sold. The military hoarded ICRC supplies and sold them in areas of scarcity, through local shops. Aid was given in very small amounts to families in the villages to reinforce their dependency on the military, and the withdrawal of food aid was used as a sanction to gain compliance.¹⁷

One might have expected the representatives of the aid agencies to register complaints, however discreetly, at such a widespread abuse of aid provision. But this does not appear to have been the case. Of the two main agencies then operating in East Timor, the ICRC and the CRS, the former quietly withdrew when faced with difficulties, whilst the latter claimed that there were no serious problems. The ICRC has played only a minor role in food distribution since 1979, confining itself to visiting the prisons of Atauro and Dili and arranging family repatriation; the CRS, after providing short-term relief aid, has concentrated on a small number of specific local projects.¹⁸

The ICRC relied heavily on the Indonesian Red Cross to carry out its programmes, most notably those concerned with the distribution of food and medicines. This was rather an unusual procedure for the ICRC since its links with national Red Cross organization are normally confined to general operational issues. In this case, however, not only these matters but detailed activities of all operations and all accounting procedures were entrusted to the Indonesian Red Cross. Even the auditors employed by the ICRC to check the financing of the operation did not visit Dili, confining their investigations to the checking of records at Indonesian Red Cross offices in Jakarta. Distribution was thus organized by the Indonesian Red Cross, with its policy of cooperating closely with the army, its funding by the central government and its use of military personnel. Under such conditions it was hardly surprising that few complaints were made, either of misappropriation or of misdistribution.

¹⁷ Ramos-Horta, n.13, p.172.

¹⁸ Taylor, n.2, p.121.

Largely Indonesian military personnel also operated the relief operations mounted by the CRS. At no stage did the CRS employ any non-Indonesian personnel in East Timor. The reasons for this had less to do with the CRS's tenuous position, as with the ICRC, than with the closeness of its perspectives to those of the military. The CRS campaign received most of its funding from the USAID and, as one might expect, it meshed neatly with US foreign policy in East Timor. The CRS-sponsored agricultural project in the village resettlement of Raimata, west of Dili, in the basin of the River Loes, funded with US\$5 million since 1981. It fitted neatly into the military's strategy of using a resettled population to cultivate cash crops on land previously farmed in common by a collection of hamlets. The CRS provided agricultural machinery, tractors, seeds and fertilizers, initially to 50-60 families, who, in the CRS's phrase, were 'given title to the land'.¹⁹

Since 1981, several hundred families have been added to the original 50-60. The crops cultivated are rice and peanuts, most of which are exported. After harvesting, the crops are taken to the state purchasing company, since farmers are not allowed to sell them to any other body. The tending of the crops has been interrupted regularly by military officials who have conscripted men for unpaid work on road-building, cleaning and, of course, for longer periods during Operasi Keamanan. At the end of 1982, 50 families were transferred from Atauro to Raimata where, according to someone who worked for the CRS on this project, they lived 'in an open prison'.

The Role of United Nations

The United Nations' involvement in Portuguese Timor can be effectively be dated back to 15 December 1960 when, through the General Assembly Resolution 1542 (XV) [Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples], it was declared to be a non-self governing state. This was, however, rejected by Portugal, the administering power, arguing that since it was a "Portuguese Province", Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter did not apply and hence the non-recognition by Lisbon of

¹⁹ Ramos-Horta, n.13, p.172.

Resolution 1542. Ironically, nearly fifteen years later, Portugal was to request the United Nations to act on its behalf to make genuine self-determination possible in the territory of East Timor. Following Indonesia's military intervention in East Timor on 7 December 1975, Portugal immediately severed diplomatic relations with Jakarta and referred the matter to the United Nations. In his letter to the President of the Security Council, the Portuguese representative stated that:

“In the present circumstances, Portugal is unable to restore peace in Timor or to ensure that the decolonization process is accomplished through peaceful and negotiated means, in accordance with the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations.”²⁰

Portugal also requested that the Security Council convene an urgent meeting so that the military aggression by Indonesia may be terminated and conditions may be abolished to enable the decolonization process to continue. Portugal also accused Indonesia of annexing East Timor with the object of denying the indigenous people the right to self-determination. As a result of the Portuguese request the United Nations debated on three main issues, namely, Indonesia's intervention in East Timor, the right to self-determination by the people of East Timor and Indonesia's unilateral annexation of the territory. The General Assembly, on 12 December 1975, in its Resolution 3485 recorded.

“Having heard the statements of the representatives of Portugal, as the administering power, concerning developments in East Timor...(the General Assembly) strongly deplores the military intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in Portuguese Timor...calls upon the government of Indonesia to ...withdraw without delay its armed forces from the territory, in order to enable the people of the territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence...[and the Security Council to] take urgent action to protect the territorial integrity of Portuguese Timor and the inalienable right of its people to self-determination.”²¹

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 72 in favour to 10 against with 43 abstentions. Due to Indonesia's refusal to comply with the General Assembly Resolution 3485 and hence its non-implementation, the Security Council adopted Resolution 384 on

²⁰ Margalhaes, Barbedo de, *East Timor: Indonesian Occupation and Genocide*, Oporto University, Oporto, 1992, p.23.

²¹ <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/782/32/IMG/NR078232>.

22 December 1975 which was passed unanimously. This called upon the government of Indonesia to retire without delay all of its forces from the territory.

The Security Council also decided to send a special envoy to East Timor for the purpose of making on-the-spot inspection of the situation as a preliminary to ensure the implementation of the resolution. On 29 December, the Secretary General appointed Mr Vittorio Win-speare Guicciardi, as his special representative to East Timor. Another resolution was adopted by the Security Council on 22 April 1976. Both resolutions called for the withdrawal of Indonesian forces from the territory and urged all states to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor as well as the inalienable right of its people to self-determination in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV).

In the light of Indonesia's unilateral annexation of East Timor on 17 August 1976, the General Assembly adopted another resolution on 1 December 1976 by a vote of 68 in favour to 20 against with 49 abstentions. In this particular resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed "the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence and the legitimacy of their struggle to achieve this right", reaffirmed "the previous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations", deplored "the persistent refusal of the government of Indonesia to comply with the abovementioned resolutions", rejected "the claim that East Timor has been integrated into Indonesia, inasmuch as the people of the territory have not been able to exercise freely their right to self-determination and independence". This resolution was somewhat watered down compared to the earlier one with the expression "without further delay" deleted.²²

In examining Table given below, it can be seen that there was only a marginal difference in the number of votes cast by countries abstained and which voted in favour of the two resolutions. However, the number of countries in support of Indonesia doubled from 10 to 20. Although the general voting pattern in relation to the General Assembly Resolution 3485 still applied to the second resolution adopted by the General Assembly,

²² <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/294/77/IMG/NR029477>.

there were a number of notable changes. First, there was a change in the position of the United States from one of abstention to one against the resolution indicating that Washington had decided to downplay its objections in the light of its political, economic and strategic interests. Second, there was a shift in the voting pattern of Australia from in favour to one of abstention with the Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser visiting Jakarta in October 1976 and promising to look towards the future in alleviating the situation in East Timor.

On 10 November 1977, there was again a voting in the United Nations Decolonization Committee. This rejected the claim that East Timor has been integrated into Indonesia, in as much as the people of the Territory have not been able to exercise freely their right to self-determination and independence. The resolution reaffirmed the earlier resolution but deleted the demand for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops. The resolution was adopted by 61 in favour to 26 against with 47 abstentions and 14 absent. By this time, Indonesia had gained six new supporters, namely, Egypt, Iraq, Maldives, Singapore, Syria and Zaire with Jordan abstaining. The 10 November resolution was confirmed in the General Assembly on 28 November 1977 by 67 votes to 26 with 47 abstentions and 8 absent.

Since then, East Timor has remained on the agenda of the United Nations with resolutions similar to the ones discussed above adopted by majorities. From 1977 onwards, the demand to withdraw Indonesian troops from East Timor was dropped. In 1982, the watered down resolution received its smallest majority in seven years even though Portugal continued to be recognised as the administering power. In 1983, there was no voting on East Timor in the General Assembly as the question was postponed until the 39th session in 1984 and there had been no voting since then till 1999.

UN General Assembly Votes on East Timor²³

Country	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Afghanistan	A	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Albania	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Algeria	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Angola	(b)	(b)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Antigua & Barbuda	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	N
Argentina	A	A	A	A	A	N	N	N
Australia	Y	A	A	N	N	N	N	N
Austria	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Bahamas	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Bahrain	Y	A	A	A	A	A	N	N
Bangladesh	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Barbados	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Belgium	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Belize	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	Y	Y
Benin	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bhutan	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Bolivia	Y	A	A	A	A	N	N	A
Botswana	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Brazil	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bulgaria	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(a)	(a)	(a)
Burkina Faso	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Burma	(a)	(a)	A	A	A	(a)	A	A
Burundi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Byelorussia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cambodia	(a)	Y	(a)	(a)	(a)	N	N	N
Cameroon	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	A
Canada	A	A	A	A	A	N	N	N
Cape Verde	(b)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Central African Rep.	(a)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Chad	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Chile	A	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
China	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Colombia	A	A	A	A	N	N	N	A
Comoros	(b)	(a)	Y	(a)	(a)	(a)	N	(a)
Congo	(a)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Costa Rica	A	A	A	(a)	Y	A	Y	A
Cuba	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cyprus	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Czech.	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	A

²³ <http://www.etan.org/etun/UNvotes.htm>

Dem. Yemen	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Denmark	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Djibouti	(b)	(b)	A	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Dominica	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(a)	(a)	A
Dominican Rep.	(a)	A	A	A	A	(a)	N	A
East Germany	Y	Y	Y	Y	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Ecuador	Y	Y	Y	(a)	(a)	A	A	A
Egypt	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
El Salvador	Y	A	A	A	A	A	N	N
Equatorial Guinea	Y	Y	Y	(a)	Y	(a)	(a)	(a)
Ethiopia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fiji	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Finland	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
France	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Gabon	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	A	A
Gambia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(a)	(a)	N
Ghana	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Greece	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Grenada	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Guatemala	A	A	A	A	A	(a)	N	N
Guinea	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Guinea-Bissau	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Guyana	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Haiti	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Honduras	(a)	A	A	(a)	N	N	N	N
Hungary	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	A
Iceland	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
India	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Indonesia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Iran	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	(a)
Iraq	A	A	N	N	N	N	N	N
Ireland	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Y
Israel	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Italy	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Ivory Coast	Y	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jamaica	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A
Japan	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Jordan	A	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Kenya	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kuwait	Y	A	A	A	A	(a)	N	N
Laos	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(a)	Y
Lebanon	(a)	A	(a)	A	A	Y	N	A
Lesotho	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y
Liberia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

Libya	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Luxembourg	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Madagascar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Malawi	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Malaysia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Maldives	(b)	A	N	N	N	N	N	N
Mali	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Malta	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Mauritania	A	N	N	N	A	A	A	A
Mauritius	A	Y	(a)	Y	(a)	(a)	(a)	Y
Mexico	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mongolia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(a)	(a)
Morocco	A	N	N	N	A	A	A	N
Mozambique	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nepal	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Netherlands	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
New Zealand	A	A	A	A	N	N	N	N
Nicaragua	A	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Niger	Y	(a)	Y	Y	Y	Y	(a)	A
Nigeria	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	A	A
Norway	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Oman	A	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Pakistan	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Panama	A	Y	Y	A	A	A	A	A
Papua New Guinea	(b)	A	A	N	N	N	N	N
Paraguay	A	A	A	N	N	N	N	N
Peru	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Philippines	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Poland	Y	Y	Y	(a)	(a)	A	A	A
Portugal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Qatar	A	A	A	N	N	N	N	N
Romania	Y	Y	Y	(a)	A	A	A	A
Rwanda	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
St.Vincent & Grenadines	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Samoa	(b)	(b)	A	A	A	(a)	A	A
Saint Lucia	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	Y	Y	Y	N
Sao Tome & Principe	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Saudi Arabia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Senegal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Seychelles	(b)	(a)	(a)	A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sierra Leone	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Thailand	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Togo	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Trinidad and Tobago	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Tunisia	(a)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Turkey	A	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Ukraine	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uganda	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
U.A.E.	Y	A	A	A	A	A	N	N
U.K.	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
U.S.S.R.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uruguay	A	N	N	N	N	N	A	N
U.S.A.	A	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Vanuatu	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	Y	Y
Venezuela	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Vietnam	(b)	(b)	Y	(a)	Y	Y	Y	Y
W. Germany	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Yemen	(a)	A	(a)	(a)	N	N	(a)	N
Yugoslavia	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Zaire	A	A	N	N	N	A	A	A
Zambia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Zimbabwe	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	Y	Y	Y

Notes:

(a) Absent during the polling.

(b) Not a member of the UN at the time.

Taking advantage of the ceasefire, on 10 May 1983, Xanana-Gusmao proposed a Peace Plan. Xanana stated that, "the FRETILIN declares that the Maubere people are aware of the fact that they are a part of Southeast Asia. Therefore, FRETILIN declares that it does not wish now or in future to be a source of conflict in the region. East Timor will be a non-aligned country and will follow a policy of peaceful coexistence. These principles will be the basis of its relations with other countries and technical, economic and cultural links to its neighbours will be reinforced. The Maubere people are well aware that they must respect the interests of their neighbours and believe as well that their own legitimate interests will be respected".²⁴

More specifically Xanana proposed for the unconditional withdrawal of the Indonesian occupying forces and the entry of the United Nations peacekeeping force in East Timor. He also proposed for the holding of free consultation with the people of East

²⁴ Sarah Niner, "A Long Journey of Resistance: The Origins and Struggle of the CNRT", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (2000) vol.32, no.1&2, January-June, p.13.

Timor and maintaining of FALINTIL in the mountains in order to keep the people free from intimidation. However ABRI was not entertained by Xanana's proposal. On 8 August 1983, general Benny Murdani warned that if FRETILIN guerrilla fighters do not accept the East Timorese government's offer of amnesty, the Government will deal them a crushing blow...This time there will be no more playing around, no mercy...I cannot allow national unity to be destroyed...The armed forces will use all available means in a clean up operation to get rid of what is left of the FRETILIN rebels. The breakdown of the cease-fire led to another phase of military operations.²⁵

From August 1983 to December 1989, the period saw the intensification of ABRI's effort to wipe out the remnants of the FRETILIN fighters with a number of major campaigns being launched against them. On the 1 September 1983 the ABRI launched *Operasi Persatuan* (Operation Unity), on 20 March and 14 July operations and on 27 July 1988, the *Operation Bersih* (Operation Clean-Up). The Indonesian political leadership, frustrated by the resilience of the resistance, called on ABRI to intensify its war efforts. Thus, on 14 September 1988, President Suharto urged ABRI to launch a "clean sweep" in East Timor against the FRETILIN²⁶. Despite these campaigns, the FRETILIN remained a military irritant.

In his mid-year 1984 message Xanana promoted FRETILIN as inclusive of all nationalists, integrationists, ex-APODETI, collaborators, and he asked everyone to admit the mistakes of the past. He called for the creation of a common nationalist platform. He declared that all atrocities committed during the counter-UDT coup and in the early resistance period would be punished and those who had suffered or committed atrocities would be guaranteed freedom of expression. In March 1986 a National Convergence was signed in Lisbon between UDT and FRETILIN leaders, but working together still proved difficult. Diaspora communities, made up substantially of UDT families who had fled during the civil war began hesitantly to work together for those inside the country.²⁷

²⁵ Taylor, n.2, p. 142.

²⁶ Singh, n.15, p. 116.

²⁷ Niner, n.24, p. 12.

In the light of ongoing military campaigns and the inability of ABRI to completely wipe out the FRETILIN fighters, as a reaction to the apparent political unity of the FRETILIN and UDT leaders living outside Indonesia in 1986 where on 18 March an agreement to create a joint entity of the Timorese National Convergence was established, the FRETILIN military leadership reorganized itself. On 7 December 1987, Xanana proclaimed that the FALINTIL was no longer regarded as the armed forces of the FRETILIN and it would be renamed as the Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor. He further stated:

“FALINTIL has only one supreme mission to carry out: to defend our homeland and maintain internal order, as established in a Constitution in which individual and collective rights are protected and the interests of citizens from all walks of life are respected. For the glorious FALINTIL to fulfil its mission within a governmental framework, whatever its political character may be, it is fundamental to affirm from this moment on the neutrality of the Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor”²⁸.

On 31 December 1988, Xanana resigned from the FRETILIN in order to maintain what was called the “non-partisan character of the Armed forces of National liberation.”²⁹ This implied that in view of its political struggle leading directly to ABRI changing its strategy with capturing Xanana, in order to blunt FRETILIN’s morale, becoming an important political goal. Meanwhile, ABRI continued its military operations and the Pope visited East Timor on 12 October 1989, indicating that the Vatican recognised East Timor’s incorporation into Indonesia.

A new phase began with the opening of East Timor in January 1990, essentially marking the rise of “unarmed opposition”. Xanana was able to make contacts with young Timorese in the cities and a policy of non-violent resistance began. This involved civil protests with the young Timorese resenting the political-cultural life of Indonesia as well as protesting against the lack of benefits from the economic development of the territory. Thus, following the formal “opening” of East Timor, the American Ambassador to

²⁸ Barbedo de Megalhaes, *East Timor: Indonesian Occupation and Genocide*, Oporto University, Portugal, 1992, p. 43.

²⁹ Ibid.

Indonesia, John Monjo visited East Timor. He was met by pro-independence demonstrators in Dili, who were later brutally suppressed by Indonesian forces.

A similar demonstration broke out in November 1990 following the visit of Vatican Ambassador to Dili. In January 1990, the newspaper of National Resistance of the Students of East Timor reappeared. In the light of these developments Xanana remained confident and defiant. Thus, in an interview with an Australian journalist in September 1990, he said "if three or four years ago we were worried about what would happen after the extermination of the FALINTIL, now we see it as the price we had to pay for our homeland"³⁰. As for the war, he argued that "time is on our side and not on Jakarta's. The FALINTIL know that we have fulfilled our duty and that we are politically, psychologically and morally prepared to face even our own slaughter because we know that this will not mean the end of the war. The Maubere people will go on fighting and will never give up, regardless of what the winds of history have in store for us".³¹

Unlike Lobato, Xanana was able to present himself, not as a FRETILIN fighter but more as a representative of the East Timorese people and this partly accounted for his prudent shift from the unwinnable military strategy to essentially a political one. His object was to make the province politically inhospitable to the Indonesians rather than try to defeat them militarily as the latter was not really an option. This "nationalistic" approach proved useful and accounted for the increased politicisation of the Timorese people, especially the youth. This strategy led to the intensification of demonstrations and this was to culminate in the "Dili Affair" on 12 November 1991.

Political Administration in East Timor and the Economic Development

Technically, a political administration was established on 17 December 1975 when the Temporary Administration of East Timor (TAET) was created under the

³⁰ Niner, n.24, p. 14

³¹ Ibid.

leadership of Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, the APODETI leader. His deputy was Francisco Lopes da Cruz, the UDT leader. This administration lasted until 30 July 1976 when Act No. 7 1976 and Government Regulation No. 19 with regard to the formation of a First Level Regional Government of the Province of East Timor came into force. As the twenty-seventh province of Indonesia, its administration was accordingly "Indonesianised".

Government Regulation No. 19 divided East Timor into 13 *Kabupaten* (districts), 61 *Kecamatan* (sub-districts) and 1,739 *desa* (villages) with the Governor as head of the province. The territorial division followed closely to the one established by the Portuguese even though there were differences in functions and line of authority. In line with the government regulation, the domestic affairs of the province, which were the main concerns of the Governor, revolved around five areas, social welfare, agriculture, health care, education and culture and public works. The Governor was given very little power and he literally functioned as a stooge of the Indonesian trying to serve as a bridge between Indonesia and East Timor. Till 1991, East Timor saw three administrations. First under Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, second under Guilherme Maria Goncalves and third under Mario Viegas Carrascalao.

An important aspect of East Timor's integration into Indonesia has been with regard to economic development of the province. As the province has been, from the start, economically unviable, the central government was confronted with many developments problems in East Timor, at times, starting from base zero, to provide the basis for economic growth in the territory. Since then, much progress has been made to overcome the neglect imposed on the people of East Timor by the Portuguese colonialists.

Various programmes were undertaken to uplift the economy of the province. In this connection, education was viewed as an important tool to uplift the people. As there was a dramatic shift in the education policy in the province, from Portuguese to Indonesian, much effort was required in this area. By 1982, there were 339 primary

schools, 23 junior schools and 4 Senior Secondary Schools. By 1982, the student population stood as follows: 12,000 in primary school, 3,810 in junior secondary school and 572 in senior secondary school. Other infrastructural development included the building of transportation facilities and hospitals.³²

As agriculture was the mainstay of the province's economy, agricultural rehabilitation was given priority. In general, it must be submitted that the Indonesian Government has done much to uplift the well being of the East Timorese since 1975. But the main bone of contention was the 'Indonesianisation' of East Timor not only in the administration but also in the education. Bhasha Indonesia was literally imposed on the East Timorese, and was taught as a compulsory subject. In a prepared testimony before the committee of Foreign Relations on 6 March 1992, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kenneth Quinn stated as follows:

"Economically, our constructive relationship with Indonesia has allowed us to extend assistance to all Indonesians, which especially benefits the East Timorese. On a per capita basis, we have provided more than twice as much A.I.D. project dollars to East Timor since 1988 as to the rest of Indonesia. Additionally, Indonesia has, on a per capital basis, funnelled over six times as much of its own economic development budget into East Timor as to any other province. In 1991, East Timor received about \$170 million in Indonesian government grants. The \$ 170 million one might note, in nominal terms, almost exactly 100 times the average yearly development expenditure for East Timor in the last days of colonial rule, all of which was in the form of repayable loans."³³

Genocide in East Timor

One of the most discussed aspects of many writings, especially Western, with regard to East Timor's integration into Indonesia has been the issue of genocide. Charges have been levelled against Indonesia due to various policies in the province since 1975, among others, to various killings undertaken by ABRI, human rights abuses, including torture, detentions and disappearances as well as the deliberate attempt to wipe out the

³² John Bresnan, "From Dominoes to Dynamos: The Transformation of Southeast Asia" (New York, 1994) pp.65-66.

³³ Ibid.

local culture of Timorese and replace it with that of mainstream of Indonesia, often labelled as a policy of cultural genocide.

Many have argued that East Timor suffered a “population loss” as a consequence of Indonesia’s “invasion and occupation” and where a “policy of genocide” was been pursued, believing that elimination of a proportion of the people would also eliminate the political, economic and security problems. As a historical trend and development, the population in the territory has grown very slowly and has also fluctuated drastically. According to official Portuguese estimates, the population of East Timor was over 650,000 in 1974, having increased from the census figure of 609,477 in 1970. Saldanha argued that the fluctuation in the growth rate of the East Timor people could be attributed to six main factors:

“First, the region was inaccessible to the outside world for 450 years of Portuguese colonial rule so that there were no immigrants entering. Second, the level of nutrition was low... which shortened... life expectancy. The third factor was the pattern of living in remote areas in the mountains without access to adequate medical facilities. Deaths often occurred due to illness, especially malaria. Fourth, many people were killed in the frequent revolts against Portuguese rule. This was especially true between 1882 and 1927 when a great war was waged between the local populace and the Portuguese regime. Fifth, the negative growth occurred between 1936 and 1948 due to the Second World War when Japanese troops occupied East Timor. These troops forced the people to do hard labour causing the death of many people. In addition, deaths also occurred due to the war itself. Sixth, the negative growth of 1.6% which occurred between 1973 and 1980 was due to the civil war as well as the operations by the Indonesian armed forces to destroy the FRETILIN. During the decade of the 1970s, it is believed that more than 200,000 people of East Timor died. In addition, thousands of people fled to Portugal or Australia.”³⁴

According to official data, the total population of East Timor was as follow from 1927 to 1973.³⁵

³⁴ M.D.Sousa, Saldanha, *The Political Economy of East Timor Development*, Pustaka Sinar Harappan, Jakarta, 1994, p. 256.

³⁵ *East Timor After Integration*, Department of Information, Jakarta, 1983, p. 85-86, as cited in Bilveer Singh’s *East Timor: Indonesia and the World*, p.137.

YEAR	POPULATION
1927	451,604
1936	436,996
1948	420,430
1960	517,079
1970	609,477
1973	626,546

In general, any analysis of the demographic status in East Timor was immediately confronted with the people of ascertaining accurate data, especially during the colonial period. Thus, what was exactly the base data needs to be correctly assessed first. What is also apparent is that the Timorese have also suffered very much from poor health conditions as well as short life expectancy. There is, however, a big discrepancy in the population figures of 1973, the last count by the Portuguese and 1980, and the first count by Indonesia. The reduction in population can be explained by the intense war conditions in the province from 1975 to 1978, where many lives are believed to have been lost, in first, during the civil war from August-December 1975 and later, the war between the joint forces and ABRI against the FRETILIN since December 1975. The war conditions, aggravated by hunger and disease, took many lives. At the same time, the birth rate also declined markedly as couples delay marriage and childbearing. There was also a big drop in the adult male population due to the war. It is also believed that many thousands of refugees fled to East Timor or other destinations in Indonesia, with many others leaving for Australia and Portugal.

A policy of cultural genocide is also believed to be perpetrated by Indonesia with the object of wiping out the Portuguese influence while transplanting the "Indonesianism" in the process. Many western observers have charged that traditional animistic cults were banned and those practised them were arrested and in some cases murdered. They attempted to forbid the use of the Portuguese language as well as of Tetum, the lingua franca among the Timorese and tried to impose the use of Bhasa Indonesia.³⁶

³⁶ Donald K. Emerson, "Indonesia in 1983: Plus Ca Change...", *Asian Survey* (1984) vol.24, no.2 p.137

Many have argued that Indonesia maintained a policy of “closed East Timor” and thus a news blackout there mainly to cover-up its various practices and policies, which more often than not, tantamounted to some form of human rights violations. Various international agencies, principally, Amnesty International and Asia Watch, through their various publications, for instance, have recorded what is regarded as human rights violations in East Timor. In addition to various mass killings, including extra-judicial murders, East Timor is believed to be in the throes of various practices of arbitrary arrests, torture, detentions and disappearances. The use of torture is believed to be widespread. There are many detention centres in East Timor, with every district, 13 in all, having their respective detention centres. The island of Atauro is a major “Prison Island” with more than 4,000 believed to have been incarcerated there.

Immediately after president Suharto offered an amnesty in August 1977, more than 40,000 people left FRETILIN-controlled areas for Indonesian controlled territory. By mid-1979 the internal refugee population is believed to have swelled to more than 300,000 people, more than 60 percent of the population. Many observers have argued that ABRI placed severe restrictions on the resettlement camps with the object of preventing the internal refugees from returning to the FRETILIN areas or to help the resistance.

By all yardsticks, the Dili incident was a major blow for Indonesia and the people of East Timor. It also severely hurt the reputation of ABRI. It occurred at a time when a major change had taken place, with East Timor greatly transformed through infrastructural development, with the people benefiting from the development-effect. ABRI was increasingly becoming accommodative, altering its security-first approach to one based on territorial operations and where prosperity and goodwill were seen as keys to the resolution of the Timor problem. Yet, the situation in East Timor came to a boiling point by November 1991 due to a number of developments. More important, the Dili incident proved to be a major catalyst for “new thinking” and to that extent, proved to be a watershed with regard to both its internal and external dynamics.

CHAPTER THREE:

DILI INCIDENT, AUSTRALIAN INTERVENTION AND THE BALLOT

The incident was the direct consequence of the death of Sebastio Gomes Rangel on 28 October from the anti-integration group. On 12 November, at dawn, a memorial mass was held at the Motael Church. Following the mass, some 2,500 youth set off in procession to the Santa Cruz Cemetery. The large number of people present at the mass indicated that it was definitely more than an ordinary mass but one which was also politically organised. This became clear later. Originally, the mourners-demonstrators intended to lay flowers at the Santa Cruz cemetery and then march to the Turismo Hotel where Professor Peter Kooijmans, the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner was staying to protest against Indonesia and integration. However, enroute to the Santa Cruz cemetery, the mourners-demonstrators began unfurling FRETILIN flags, posters of Xanana as well as banners with slogans such as "Free East Timor" and "Long Live Independence".¹

While the procession was generally peaceful, even though noisy, enroute a scuffle broke out and the details are disputed. The Indonesian government has maintained that a number of demonstrators attacked an ABRI Major who was seriously wounded. Others have argued that the mourners-demonstrators were provoked when some ABRI personnel attempted to grab Xanana's posters and FRETILIN'S flags. Whatever the actual cause, violence broke out between the security forces and the mourners-demonstrators. Twenty minutes later, the procession reached the cemetery and columns of soldiers arrived from different directions and opened fire on the procession. After the initial 2 to 3 minutes, burst of automatic fire and sporadic shooting continued for another 30 minutes.² It was a bloody affair with many killed and wounded. Present at the cemetery were seven foreigners. A New Zealander was killed while 2 American journalists were beaten while an English cameraman arrested even though he was released later. The foreigners present

¹ John B. Haseman, *Catalyst for Change in Indonesia: The Dili Incident*, Asian Survey, Vol. 35, No. 8, August, 1995, pp. 761-762.

² Bilveer Singh, *East Timor, Indonesia and the World, Myths and Realities* (Singapore, 1995) p. 157.

were later to become the major witnesses of what came to be known as the "Dili Incident" while to others as the "Dili Massacre".

The grim incident of the Indonesian troops firing at the demonstrators were captured on the film by foreign journalists and replayed for television audiences around the world. The public relations problem was exacerbated by the remarks of the armed forces commander, General Try Sutrisno, which were seen both locally and abroad as a clumsy and insensitive attempt to downplay the incident. Most western Governments were highly critical of the Indonesia; the Netherlands, Denmark and Canada suspended their aid programme, and the U.S. House of Representatives voted a U.S. \$2.3 million cut in military training assistance.³

Until the Dili incident, for majority of Indonesians, East Timor was a non-issue despite many reports of wide-ranging political, economic and security problems obtained in the province. The Dili incident became a catalyst for change in East Timor that may, at long last, hold the potential for a just settlement of the long and often bitter aftertaste of Portuguese colonialism. Responding to the international outcry, President Suharto ordered a high-level official inquiry into the incident, and the U.S. and Japanese governments indicated they would review aid commitments to Indonesia if the findings were little more than a whitewash.⁴ The Portuguese Prime Minister, in an emotional speech in Parliament on 19 November 1991 condemned the incident saying that "in vehement and heartfelt repudiation of the ignoble and brutal violence of which the martyred people of Timor has been the victim, in yet another vile act of terror and intimidation on the part of the Indonesian authorities"⁵. The Portuguese Parliament unanimously approved a resolution condemning the "massacre" and decreed a day of national mourning in the country. Through Portugal, the Economic Community was mobilised to make a stern condemnation of the incident on 13 November. Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke deplored the killings and said that "whatever provocation...the reaction of the Indonesian military was tragically excessive" and

³ MacIntyre Andrew, Indonesia in 1992: Coming to Terms With the Outside World, Asian Survey, Vol 33 No. 2, February 1993, pp. 204-205

⁴ Ibid., p. 205.

⁵ Barbedo de Megalhaes, Oporto University, Portugal, 1992, p. 43 as cited in Bilveer Singh, p. 62.

demanded an inquiry into the "appalling tragedy".⁶ In addition to Portugal, the United States, the EC and Australia, the Scandinavian countries and the Vatican expressed condemnations. The United Nations Secretary General Peres De Cuellar deplored the killings and announced plans to send a mission to investigate the incident.

While critics of the regime were dismissive of the report produced by the commission of inquiry for failing to address the root cause of the problem in East Timor, others were impressed by the fact that an official inquiry would censure the military for using "excessive force." Ultimately, two senior generals were sacked from their positions, and charges were brought against a number of the soldiers actually involved in the incident. It was not until the 12 November 1991 Santa Cruz massacre that the EU issued its first statement of outright condemnation of Indonesia. Following Portugal's assumption of the presidency on 1 January 1992, where in August 1992, the EC-ASEAN cooperation agreement was postponed due to Indonesia's East Timor policy.⁷

The Dili Incident also greatly discredited Governor Mario Carrascalao. Ironically, it embarrassed and undermined those who argued that "openness" would bring in benefits for the territory. Just as Brigadier General Rudolf Warouw was blamed by his seniors for giving the East Timorese an opportunity to blemish ABRI's and Indonesia's reputation, Governor Mario was blamed for failing to anticipate the negative political consequences of opening up East Timor. While the governor was primarily concerned with attracting private investments into the province so that jobs could be created, not only very little investments flowed into the province but it allowed the FRETILIN to use the new setting to pursue its political agenda of exploiting youth grievances through political demonstrations, culminating in the 12 November 1991 incident. This directly led to Jakarta and ABRI to doubt Mario's ability to operate in the new setting. It was thus not surprising that he was later replaced.⁸

⁶ Bilveer Singh, p. 163.

⁷ Ward, Eilis and Peter Carey, *The East Timor Issue in the Context of EU-Indonesian Relations, 1975-99*, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol. 29, No. 83, 2001, p. 58.

⁸ Bilveer Singh, p. 167.

For the majority of East Timorese, their sufferings continued due to the goals and defiance of a political minority. What was tragic was that most of the killed, wounded and missing, were youth, many of them still students. The change of military leadership in East Timor also worsened the situation for the locals. Brigadier General Theo Syafei replaced Brigadier General Warouw and he adopted a much tougher policy towards the local population. The number of troops in the province was increased with efforts intensified to capture the guerrilla leadership, especially Xanana. The thirteen Timorese who were tried for their role in organising the 12 November 1991 demonstrations were given heavy sentences, between nine and fifteen years with one sentenced to life imprisonment.⁹

While the Dili Incident cost many Timorese lives, the East Timor problem was immediately catapulted into national and world news. While the incident was a blow for the resistance, it was, nevertheless, a major turning point for FRETILIN'S overseas representatives, supporters and sympathisers. FRETILIN representatives, such as Ramos Horta used the incident to return the issue to international prominence arguing that the killings were not isolated but a part of an ongoing repression since 1975.¹⁰ The widespread international coverage given to the Dili Incident greatly boosted FRETILIN'S international image with many sympathetic to FRETILIN'S quest for self-determination. Not surprisingly, Ramos Horta proposed a five-stage "Peace Plan" in June 1992.

According to the plan, the first stage would involve the withdrawal of all Indonesian troops from East Timor within a time period of two years. In the second phase, there would be increased involvement of international organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross in East Timor. In the third phase, an autonomous government must be granted to East Timor. If the third phase could not be realised, then the fourth phase would involve the "limited government" being extended for another five years. In the fifth phase, a referendum would be held, under United Nations supervision, to ascertain the choice of

⁹ Ibid., p. 168-169.

¹⁰ Ramos-Horta Jose, "Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor", p. 92.

the East Timor people¹¹. Indonesia, however, rejected the Horta Peace Plan. Despite the rejection of the plan, FRETILIN was able to confirm the view that it had given up gaining power through military means and is resorting to politico-diplomatic means to project itself as the sole-representative of the people of East Timor. Also in March 1993 the United Nations Human Rights Commission voted to censure Indonesia on its East Timor's policy. Even the United States voted for the motion, indicating that the Clinton Administration would be far more assertive with regard to Human Rights issues, in general and in East Timor, in particular.

While on the other front, partly due to the completion of Mario Carrascalao's second term and where he was not eligible for reappointment, there was, however, a strong feeling that a new political leader was needed in East Timor to heal the wounds of November 1991 at Dili's Santa Cruz cemetery and to show the way forward. Mario Carrascalao, under tremendous pressure was also forced to accept the responsibility for the Dili incident. In this regard, a major debate ensued in the province as to, who would succeed Mario Carrascalao, with the crux of debate being not as to who would be the next governor but rather whether the fourth governor would be an East Timorese or an outsider. While various names were being mentioned, the then governor Mario Carrascalao, argued that it did not really matter whether the next governor was indigenous to East Timor or not. Rather to him, "the next governor should be able to develop East Timorese to be real Indonesians"¹². However, on keeping in mind that the appointment of a non-East Timorese would give a wrong impression among foreign countries and dissatisfied local people that Indonesia meant to colonize East Timor. Also the hearts of the East Timorese people could only be won back if the new governor would have been someone who had local ties with the people.

However, despite the disciplinary action against the military personnel for their 'excessive' role in the Dili incident, in short term, the military intensified its iron fisted policy in East Timor with the objective of wiping out the FRETILIN guerrilla fighters.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 93.

¹² Jakarta Post, 1 June 1992.

This policy paid off with the capture of Xanana on 23 November 1992. The capture of Xanana, the man who led the armed struggle, since the death of Nicalau Lobato in 1979, against East Timor's integration into Indonesia, was a major blow to the FRETILIN and the anti-integration cause. Prior to Xanana's arrest, his deputy, Jose da Costa was arrested on 23 January 1992, raising hopes that the arrest of FRETILIN's key leader would mark an end to the armed rebellion. Mauhunu succeeded Xanana, however, he was captured on 3 April in a cave in Manufasi village in Ainaro, about 50 kilometres from Dili. Konis Santana succeeded Mauhunu. In January 1993, Xanana's trial began and on 20 May 1993, he was sentenced by the Dili District Court to life imprisonment for illegal possession of arms and for leading a separatist movement. On 13 August 1993, President Suharto granted him clemency for his plea and reduced his prison sentence to twenty years.

The APEC Demonstrations

The APEC Summit was to be held in Bogor, on 12 November 1994, which coincided with the third anniversary of the 'Dili incident'. Earlier in May, Philippines President General Fidel Ramos, at the request of the Indonesian Government, barred foreigners from attending the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor, claiming that their presence would be inimical to the national interests¹³. However the coincidence provided the impetus for the East Timorese with the anti-integration persuasion the opportunity to highlight their grievances while at the same time grabbing the international limelight that could cause further pressure on Jakarta. As the Heads of the Governments arrived in Jakarta for the APEC Summit, the APEC Demonstrations capitulated the East Timorese issue into the limelight, in its most serious form since the Dili incident. Three Demonstrations were staged that day, first demonstration was held in Dili to mark the third anniversary of the 'Dili incident', the second was sparked by the murder of an East Timorese fishmonger at a market in Dili and the third, the most important was marked, when 29 East Timorese youth entered the U.S. Embassy compound during the APEC meeting and staged a 12 day sit-in-protest.¹⁴

¹³ Taylor, John G., p. 215.

¹⁴ Singh Bilveer, p. 181-182.

The rioting which broke out in Dili on 12 November was essentially sparked off by inter-ethnic rivalries with local Timorese resenting the economic success of the *pendatang*s, newcomers from other provinces that have flooded into East Timor, especially since 1989 when the territory was 'opened'. This created much resentment among the locals and ethnic conflicts of this nature had the tendency to break out into rioting with various political groups taking advantage to protest Jakarta's domination of the province¹⁵. It was, however, the political stunt of the Timorese youth at the American Embassy, at a time when President Clinton was attending the APEC Summit and following it, undertaking his first official state visit to Indonesia that riveted worldwide attention on East Timor.

Another major incident occurred on 12 January 1995, when Indonesian troops executed six civilians near Liquica to the west of Dili in reprisal for a FRETILIN attack in which one Indonesian soldier was wounded. Major Laedan L. Simbolon announced that the six were GPK members, belonging to the Konis Santana FRETILIN group, who were killed in a combat encounter. The local residents and the church leaders immediately rose in protest. This immediately led to a number of foreign governments, namely, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Netherlands, to express concern through their embassies in Jakarta. This uproar led President Suharto to order the National Commission for Human Rights to investigate the incident. The five-man team led by the Commission chief Ali Said started the inquiry immediately, being the first such inquiry in an ABRI-related situation in East Timor. However, the investigation team could not do much, except blaming the six people for being involved in a clandestine activity and thus justifying the killings.

On October 1 1996 The Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced that its Annual Prize has been awarded jointly to Bishop Belo, head of the East Timorese Catholic Church, and Jose Ramos-Horta, external representative of the resistance movement. The awarding of the prize is reported internationally as recognition of East Timor's suffering and resistance to the Indonesian occupation, as well as being a major setback for the

¹⁵ Ibid., p 181

Indonesian Government. While on 10 December 1996, Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. The Indonesian diplomats boycotted the ceremony, attended by world dignitaries.¹⁶

In January 1997 Kofi Annan was appointed the new Secretary-General of the United Nations. The new Secretary-General took a more pro-active approach with the aim of revitalising the tripartite process on East Timor involving the UN Secretariat, Indonesia and Portugal. In February of that year, he appointed Ambassador Jamsheed Marker of Pakistan as his Personal Representative on East Timor.

Operasi Tuntas, Asian currency crisis and the fall of Suharto

On 20 June 1997, the Indonesian armed forces announced the beginning of a new military operation, Operasi Tuntas, literally meaning to eradicate. New battalions were dispatched to the territory, as the armed forces announced that they had compiled a target list of 1,700 East Timorese suspected of being members of the clandestine front, or in contact with guerrilla forces. Shortly after the announcement of Operasi Tuntas, Indonesia was hit by economic shock waves from which it has yet to recover.

Indonesia turned out to be the most vulnerable of the Asian economies. Between June 1997 and January 1998 its currency lost almost 80 percent of its value, plunging from around Rp2,400 to the US dollar, to Rp16,500. The crumbling value of the Rupiah sent interest rates to 60 percent, paralysing the financial and industrial sectors and sending the price of the commodities skyrocketing. This in turn led to massive unemployment and to a dramatic rise in absolute poverty. Income per Capita, which was hovering at about US\$1,000 before the crisis, was estimated at less than US\$350 by early 1998.¹⁷

Where only a year earlier Indonesia had been lauded internationally for its economic success, its exploding levels of foreign currency debt put it at the mercy of the

¹⁶ Suter, Keith, Nobel hears East Timor, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January/February 1997, p.47

¹⁷ *Jakarta Post*, 17 April 1998.

International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF took the opportunity to force on Indonesia a number of far reaching reforms as a condition of a rescue package, including the slashing of subsidies on fuel, electricity and food. This however, made the situation for the ordinary people worse, triggering food riots in several towns across Java.

Entrenched as he was, Suharto was initially able to survive even the onslaught of the economic crisis. In March 1998 the people's Consultative Assembly unanimously elected him to yet another five-year term in office. But his appointment of a cabinet that included his daughter 'Tutut' and long-term crony Bob Hasasn saw confidence in Suharto plummet further. 'Corruption, collusion and nepotism' quickly caught on as the catch cry of the reformasi movement.

A turning point came on 12 May with the fatal shooting of four Jakarta students at a demonstration at Jakarta's prestigious Trisakti University. The public breach of an unwritten taboo made the government appear desperate and witless, as did its failure to prevent looting, pillaging and burning of ethnic Chinese areas of Jakarta over the next few days, which left more than 2,000 dead. Indeed, the violence that shook the capital was understood in many quarters to have been engineered by a section of the military itself in an effort to tarnish the opponents of the regime and justify crackdown and possibly a military takeover- by Suharto's son-in-law Lieutenant-General Prabowo Subianto.¹⁸

With increasing opposition on all fronts, accompanied by thousands demonstrating against declining living standards and Suharto's rule, and with the armed forces concluding that the situation was becoming uncontrollable, Suharto was forced to resign on 21 May 1998. He handed over power to his vice president B.J. Habibie, an aeronautical engineer, who had, as a minister, been in charge of developing Indonesia's high tech industries. On the immediate challenges facing Habibie was the upsurge of demands for autonomy and independence in the provinces unleashed by reformasi.

¹⁸ Richburg, K. "Seven days in May that toppled a titan: back-room intrigue led to Suharto's fall", Washington Post, 24 May, 1998.

Relations with Jakarta and the provinces had long been beset by tensions stemming out from the new order's highly centralised system of administration.

There had been little opportunity to express such grievances in the past, since Suharto had always been quick to accuse regionally based movements of harbouring separatist ambitions-or of links with armed rebels in the case of East Timor, Aceh, and West Papua. Habibie emerged as an enthusiastic advocate of decentralisation, initiating legislation that devolved considerable powers to provincial and sub provincial levels. On East Timor he went further, surprising the world, and many in his own government, by agreeing to UN-supervised referendum in the future of the territory.¹⁹

Faced with this crisis, the Suharto regime failed either to deal with it or to negotiate remedial packages with international organizations. This led to widespread demands for political change. The Suharto family and its economic and political cronyism had come to be viewed by most Indonesian as the main barriers to economic improvement and political reform.

He was replaced by his chosen successor, B.J. Habibie, as interim president. The majority of Jakarta elite politicians and leading army generals saw him as a safe pair of hands to oversee a transition to a post-Suharto government. With the removal of Suharto, it appeared that a democratic space was opening up in Indonesia. New political parties were established, the tightly controlled press experienced unprecedented freedom, and various regions began to call for greater autonomy. Some of the most obviously corrupt officials were removed, and the more notorious political structures of the Suharto regime began to disintegrate.²⁰

Meanwhile, various conflicts developed on several fronts: between regions and Jakarta government, between ethnic groups and religious communities. These conflicts

¹⁹ Bourchier, David, and Vedi R. Hadiz, *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reader*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2003, p. 19.

²⁰ Anwar, Dewi Fortuna, *The Habibie Presidency*, in Geoff Forrester (ed.) *Post Suharto Indonesia: Renewal and Chaos*, KITLV Press, Singapore, 1999, p. 35.

were at times accompanied by attacks on the Chinese population in many urban areas. Fuelled by the deteriorating economic situation, the conflicts were manipulated by various political groups and factions within the armed forces, pursuing their sectional interests. As Indonesia lurched from one conflict to another in the post-Suharto months, governed by a Jakarta elite seemingly unable to reverse the drop in living standards, and offering the hope that all would be well after national elections scheduled for June 1999.

In June 1998, President Habibie stated that it was prepared to give East Timor a wide-ranging autonomy, with Jakarta retaining only three areas: foreign affairs, external defence, and some aspects of monetary and fiscal policy. Autonomy could redistribute political power, representation, and control over the state's resources to the provincial or district levels. As such it gave political elites in these territorial units more power to direct resources to their specific needs and to adopt regulations or laws that could enhance the specific cultural or religious identities of the ethnic groups represented in the area. Autonomy therefore, could provide more flexibility and resources to meet group demands, provided that the elites in power were actually representative.²¹

In August 1998, during their meeting with the Secretary-General, the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Portugal reached agreement that their senior officials should begin in-depth discussions on a possible wide-ranging autonomy for East Timor, without prejudice to their respective positions of principle. In effect, they agreed to put aside for the time being, the question of the final status of East Timor and to attempt to define the parameters of a suitable autonomy. While for Indonesia this autonomy would be the final dispensation, Portugal was willing to consider autonomy only as an interim or transitional arrangement pending the eventual exercise by the people of East Timor of their right to self-determination. The East Timorese resistance, under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, had for some years endorsed the idea of transitional arrangements within Indonesia for an agreed period before the holding of a referendum.

²¹ Bertrand, Jacques, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, p. 185.

Indonesia had always resisted any direct involvement of East Timorese political leaders in the negotiations, maintaining the position that the East Timorese had expressed their will once and for all in 1976 and that the international issue was kept alive only by the unreasonable obstinacy of Portugal. Its acquiescence in the UN's convening of the annual All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue, which began in 1995, had been on the condition that this dialogue did not address the political status of East Timor. The independence movement itself became more broadly united with the formation in April 1998 of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), under the leadership of Gusmao. The UN and others urged the release of Gusmão and establishment out of the AIETD (All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue) of a more active group of East Timorese leaders who could develop an East Timorese position on a formula for a settlement. Indonesia maintained that Gusmão would be released only as part of an overall settlement, but in August 1998 agreed that the East Timorese would be more closely associated with the tripartite process, primarily through the UN.²²

In East Timor itself, the mood of growing political freedom throughout Indonesia was reflected in increasingly open pro-independence activism, which rapidly challenged the control of the authorities. The visits of PRSG Marker and other UN representatives were attended by a determination of pro-independence youth to demonstrate and corresponding nervousness on the part of the Indonesian authorities. Gusmão's appeals from his Jakarta prison for calm on the part of his student supporters became less certain to be heeded.

Meanwhile, the Australian Labour Party began to reconsider its policy and in August 1997 espoused East Timor's right to self-determination. Against the backdrop of the dramatic changes in Indonesia, the government of Prime Minister John Howard began its own policy review. In August 1998, Australian government officials, picking up a suggestion of Marker's, canvassed a range of views of East Timorese in East Timor, Indonesia, and elsewhere and found negligible acceptance that East Timorese should

²² Sarah Niner, "A Long Journey of Resistance: The Origins and Struggle of the CNRT", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (2000) vol.32, no.1&2, January-June, p.13

concede to the precondition of accepting international recognition of integration in return for autonomy. On 19 December 1998, Howard sent Habibie a letter that reflected his assessment. He emphasized that Australia continued to maintain its long-standing position that “the interests of Australia, Indonesia and East Timor are best served by East Timor remaining part of Indonesia.” The issue, he urged, could be resolved only through direct negotiations between Indonesia and East Timorese leaders. A decisive element of East Timorese opinion was insisting on an act of self-determination:

“It might be worth considering, therefore, a means of addressing the East Timorese desire for an act of self-determination in a manner that avoids an early and final decision on the future status of the province.... The successful implementation of an autonomy package with a built-in review mechanism would allow time to convince the East Timorese of the benefits of autonomy within the Indonesian Republic.”²³

This letter was not well received by Habibie, when the Australian ambassador in Jakarta presented it to him. In December 1998, Australia, the only government that had given de jure recognition to Indonesian sovereignty in East Timor, decided to change its policy and call for self-determination for the East Timorese people. This was communicated directly to President Habibie in a letter from Prime Minister John Howard.²⁴ On 27 January 1999, the minister for information emerged from a cabinet meeting to announce that if the East Timorese decided to reject the offer of special autonomy, the president would recommend to the People’s Consultative Assembly that the July 1976 law integrating East Timor as Indonesia’s twenty-seventh province should be revoked.

The fact that the offer of special autonomy alone would not resolve the issue was increasingly obvious from reports of the situation in East Timor, and its acknowledgement was being quietly pressed on Indonesia by Marker and by other governments besides Australia, most notably the United States and the European Union. Indonesia’s economic negotiators were anxious for a resolution, and even within the

²³ Downer, Alexander, East Timor- looking back on 1999, Australian journal of international affairs, vol.54, no. 1, 2000, p.13

²⁴ The United Nations and East Timor: Self-determination through Popular Consultation, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, 2000, p. 7

Indonesian armed forces there was a growing desire to be rid of the problem. The possibility of East Timor's independence had become a subject of open discussion in Indonesia, with several opposition figures and non-governmental actors (and in private some civilian and military officials) foreseeing the holding of an eventual referendum. In further discussions with the UN and Portugal, a 'direct ballot' was agreed for the referendum, and a number of governments offered to send troops and provide financial assistance for a UN peacekeeping force. It seemed that President Habibie's view had prevailed and that political conditions in Indonesia had produced the possibility of a vote on independence- since this would be the logical outcome if the East Timorese rejected the autonomy package.

Reacting to Habibie's declaration on East Timor, Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leader of the most popular party, the Indonesian Democratic Party in Struggle (PDI), and the likeliest candidate to win the presidency, argued that it was a threat to national unity, and that East Timor should merely have the same status as other provinces. The most serious criticisms, however, came from various leaders of the Armed Forces. To discredit Habibie, generals such Wiranto, Commander of the Armed Forces and Defence Minister, would claim later that the President had not consulted them before making the decision. This was not true. It was discussed with his main advisers and with Foreign Minister Ali Alatas before it was announced.

While some leading members of the Armed Forces were prepared to accept Habibie's policies on East Timor, powerful factions were determined to undermine it, regarding East Timor's integration as irreversible. The movement of Kopassus troops and trained paramilitaries into East Timor in November 1998 marked the beginning of *Operasi Sapu Jagad*. The aims of *Operasi Sapu Jagad* were to portray East Timor as a territory racked by civil war and thus incapable of self-government, to sabotage the referendum, and to eliminate local leaders of the independence movement.

In early February 1999, shortly after official confirmation of the new Habibie policy, the town was attacked, and a camp set up in the grounds of the church. The

population was terrorized, and fled to neighbouring Suai. At around the same time, on 2 February, a small group of paramilitaries attacked Maubara, on the northern coast, targeting independence leaders. On 24 February, groups moved into Dili, firing on a pro-independence demonstration, killing three people. After an attack by paramilitaries on the village of Guiso, near Maubara, 1,600 people fled into the mountains as the paramilitaries captured and killed inhabitants, before occupying the village.

As distinct paramilitary groups emerged, they gave themselves new names, *Besi Merah Putih* (Red and White Steel), *Mahidi* (Dead or Alive for Indonesia), *Aitarak* (Thorn), and *Darah Mera* (Red Blood). They co-ordinated their tactics in a command structure named *Milisi Pro-Otonomi*, headed by Joao Tavarres, a long-time Kopassus collaborator, with Eurico Guterres, the *Aitarak* commander, as his deputy. The worst of the killings—indeed the worst massacre since Santa Cruz in 1991—occurred in Liquica on 6 April 1999. Some 2,000 people had sought shelter in the church compound after violent incidents in and round the town in preceding days in which civilians had been killed by *Besi Merah Putih* (BMP) militia and Indonesian military. Eleven days later, Dili became the next target of *Operasi Sapu Jagad*. A rally was held outside the governor's office. Organized by *Milisi Pro-Otonomi*, it was attended by East Timor's military commander Colonel Tono Suratnam, and chief of police colonel Timbul Silaen.

Meanwhile Foreign Ministers Jaime Gama of Portugal and Ali Alatas of Indonesia met in New York on 7 and 8 February they agreed the autonomy plan should be presented to the East Timorese people as an “end” and not an “interim” solution. Accepting Indonesia's proposal for autonomy would mean permanent integration within Indonesia. Conversely, a rejection of the proposal by the East Timorese people would represent an irreversible step towards independence. The two Foreign Ministers met again on 10-11 March 1999 in New York. They agreed there should be a direct ballot in which all East Timorese of voting age, both those living in and outside East Timor, would vote to accept or reject a permanent autonomy status with Indonesia. The final stages of the negotiations took place against a background of increasing political violence in East Timor.

On 21 April, the Commission on Peace and Stability was established in Dili under the aegis of the TNI chief General Wiranto. It included representatives of the pro-independence and pro-integration sides, the East Timor local government and the local police and military commanders. The Commission, in cooperation with the UN, was later entrusted with the task of elaborating a code of conduct, by which all parties should abide, for the period prior to and following the ballot. The code of conduct was to ensure that both sides adopted the necessary steps to achieve disarmament. Talks in New York between 21-23 April ended with Alatas and Gama concluding a set of three agreements outlining a popular consultation process. These were then taken to Lisbon and Jakarta for final approval.

On 5 May 1999, at a historic ceremony in New York, the three agreements were signed. There was the overall Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Portugal on the question of East Timor. Annexed to this was the constitutional framework for autonomy as submitted by Indonesia, an agreement regarding the modalities for the popular consultation and a broad agreement on security arrangements. The main agreement requested the Secretary-General to put the proposed constitutional framework to the East Timorese people for their acceptance or rejection. Article 5 stipulated that in case of their acceptance, Indonesia would initiate the constitutional measures necessary to implement the autonomy framework.

Meanwhile, Portugal would initiate the procedures necessary for the removal of East Timor from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories before the UN General Assembly, thereby putting the question of East Timor off the international agenda. Conversely, Article 6 determined that if the East Timorese rejected the proposed autonomy, Indonesia would take the constitutional steps to terminate its links with East Timor. In this event, Indonesia and Portugal and the Secretary-General would agree on the arrangements for a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority in East Timor to the United Nations, enabling East Timor to begin a process of transition towards

independence. The question that the Secretary-General was required to put to the people of East Timor was spelt out more precisely in the modalities agreement.

“Do you accept the proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia?”

OR

“Do you reject the proposed special autonomy for East Timor, leading to East Timor’s separation from Indonesia?”²⁵

The agreement on security arrangements gave Indonesia the responsibility to ensure a secure environment devoid of violence and intimidation during the popular consultation. This was a prerequisite for the holding of a free and fair ballot. During the negotiations, prior to the signing of that agreement, the UN Secretariat made a number of recommendations to the parties regarding security. These included the disarmament of all paramilitary groups, the confinement of FALINTIL and the withdrawal of some Indonesian forces from East Timor in the period leading up to the consultation. The agreement also emphasized that the absolute neutrality of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the Indonesian police (POLRI) was essential. POLRI were given sole responsibility for maintaining security during the mission and ballot. The modalities agreement made provision only for a number of United Nations “security guards” and “international civilian police” to be on hand for the ballot to advise POLRI.

Indonesia made it clear that it would not accept any dilution of its overall responsibility for security. It would not tolerate any armed UN peacekeeping presence. President Habibie was not guaranteed a term beyond the next MPR session and many of his rivals opposed the agreements. The modalities agreement set 8 august 1999 as the ballot date for the popular consultation. The difficult terrain and limited infrastructure of East Timor further complicated this task. UN electoral and logistics personnel had wanted the date for the popular consultation to be 8 September at the earliest. The timetable listed in the agreements was considered much too short for such a huge task,

²⁵ Marker, Jamsheed, *East Timor. A Memoir of the Negotiations and Independence* (North Carolina, 2003) p. 148.

but it was set at Indonesia's behest. The Secretary-General said on May 1999 that the UN would face considerable logistical and other problems in carrying out the popular consultation within the short time frame.

In resolution 1236 on 7 May, the Security Council welcomed the 5 May Agreements and the Secretary-General's intention to establish a UN presence in East Timor. The Council requested the Secretary-General to provide detailed plans for the popular consultation and the establishment of the mission. An assessment team led by the UN's Department of Political Affairs was in East Timor in early May to evaluate the political and security situation on the ground. The advance team also discussed with Indonesian authorities the facilities available in Dili. The mission would see almost 1,000 international staff work together with up to 4,000 locally hired personnel throughout East Timor. Its roads were in poor condition and most required four-wheel drive vehicles. Existing communications infrastructure was limited with few telephones outside the two largest towns.

In the Secretary-General's 22 May report to the Council, the establishment of the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was proposed to organize and conduct the popular consultation. He said three essential conditions must be met for it to be effective. First, it must at all times have the full confidence and backing of the Security Council. Secondly, it must function with the full cooperation of the Indonesian authorities. Thirdly, it must have the resources necessary to carry out its tasks. The Secretary-General stressed that UNAMET would carry out its tasks objectively and impartially. Its personnel would neither seek nor accept instructions from any source external to the United Nations. Marker would continue to serve as his Personal Representative with ongoing responsibility for diplomatic negotiations and he appointed Ian Martin of the United Kingdom as his Special Representative for the East Timor Popular Consultation and as head of UNAMET. The mission would include political, electoral, civilian police, information and administrative/financial components that would report to Martin.

As spelled out in the modalities agreement, there were 13 external voting centres to cater for the East Timorese outside of the Territory- five in Indonesia, four in Australia and one each in Portugal, Mozambique, Macau and the United States. All participants in the consultative process were required to register over a twenty-day period specifically for the polling on 8 August 1999. At its conclusion, registration lists would be posted publicly for five days. For the polling, the registration centres would be subdivided into 700 polling stations. External polling would follow an identical timetable.

The registration was begun on 16 July, although, in a 14 July letter to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General noted that all the necessary conditions did not exist for the peaceful implementation of the popular consultation process throughout the Territory. The delay to the start of registration required that the date of the ballot itself be again postponed to 30 August.

Meanwhile, FALINTIL and the militia leadership expressed their readiness, in principle, to concentrate their forces in designated areas and to enable the police to exercise full responsibility for law and order. Important commitments were also made by pro-independence and pro-integration leaders to respect the consultation process, lay down their arms and to achieve disarmament well in advance of the ballot. It was hoped that actual implementation of these steps would lead to a major improvement of the security situation in East Timor allowing a credible consultation process to be conducted. UNAMET was expected to propose and participate in the method of laying down of arms and disarmament. It was not an easy task. After UNAMET's arrival, FALINTIL unilaterally cantoned its forces at four locations within East Timor, but refused to disarm until the TNI drastically reduced its presence and restricted the remaining forces to their barracks. MLOs monitored the FALINTIL cantonment and reported that it appeared genuine. Meanwhile, the pro-integration militia publicly surrendered small amounts of old or defective weapons while they continued their campaign of violence on the streets.

Despite some promising signs, UNAMET concluded that a level playing field was never close to existing in a political campaign marked by militia attacks on pro-

independence campaigners. Pro-independence students who returned from Indonesia or Dili to establish themselves in the districts provoked the greatest hostility and several of the newly opened CNRT offices were attacked and closed. As the end of the campaign period and the day of the ballot approached, an upsurge in militia activity was evident. Rumours were rampant and anxiety high as the ballot approached. In addition to UNAMET's own reports, the Independent Electoral Commission wrote to Special Representative Martin on 20 August asking him to draw to the attention of the Secretary-General their concerns that "the security situation in East Timor is deteriorating by the day". The Commission stated that Indonesia had failed to fulfil its obligations of ensuring a secure environment and of impartiality. Their assessment was conveyed to the Security Council when the UN Secretariat briefed it on 24 August. Three days later the Council by resolution 1262 endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation on increased staffing and the restructuring of UNAMET in the "interim period" as proposed on 9 August. UNAMET's mandate was extended until 30 November 1999. The dramatic pace of events soon overtook this resolution.

Throughout June, paramilitary violence intensified. Several incidents indicate the kind of atmosphere in which UNAMET officials had to operate. In June, Eurico Guterres, head of the Aitarak militia, was appointed head of a newly created civil defence guard in Dili, the PAM Swakarsa, whose aim was supposed to be to assist the Indonesian police in securing law and order. The appointment was endorsed by Colonel Timbul Silaen, East Timor's chief of police. Paramilitary attacks on UNAMET offices in Maliana and Viqueque in late June resulted in UN personnel being withdrawn from both offices. The Maliana office was attacked by about one hundred members of the Darus militia gang, armed with sticks and rocks. The building was severely damaged, a UN officer was wounded and several East Timorese who were sheltering in the building had to be taken to hospital with serious injuries. One week later, a convoy of trucks carrying relief and medical personnel to thousands of internally displaced people being held forcibly in sub-districts in Liquica was attacked on its way back to Dili by Besi Merah Putih militia.

A week before the referendum, Eurico Guterres addressed a pro-integration rally in Dili, attended by an estimated 15,000 people. The leader of Aitarak ended by threatening that if East Timor voted for independence, it would become a sea of fire. From Maliana, on the eve of the vote, a senior UN field officer reported that Indonesian soldiers had stockpiled 400 M-16 automatic rifles, and that in cooperation with local paramilitaries, their commander had finalized plans to set up road-blocks, cut off communications and electricity, and conduct a pogrom against anybody voting for independence.

The dawn of 30 August came with a remarkable and inspiring scene. On the scrappy field in front of the United Nations office, thousands of people had gathered long before the opening of the polls at 6.30 a.m. They had walked for hours, barefoot or in rubber sandals and many of them had bleeding cuts on their feet and ankles. At times the scale of the turnout was almost overwhelming. In East Timor as a whole, by 1 p.m. four out of five of the 450,000 voters had turned out; by the end of the day the UN estimated the turnout at more than 90 per cent. Indeed, the turnout ended up at a staggering 98.5 percent and when the counting was finished on 4 September, it was announced that 344,000 or 78 percent had rejected the autonomy package, and voted for independence.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE ROLE THE UNITED NATIONS

It was soon evident that protection was needed. On 1 September, attacks on pro-independence supporters were reported to UNAMET from many areas, but particularly from Ermera, Aileu, Maliana and Dili. In the capital, paramilitaries wearing black shirts with Aitarak printed on them emerged and began shooting anyone they came across. They advanced on the UNAMET office, burning nearby houses rented by UN staff. Three hundred refugees from previous militia violence who were sheltering next to the UN base fled in panic into the UN compound. Many people were attacked and killed in the streets. An American cameraman reported, 'I saw one man hit with a rifle. He fell to the ground where about five or six people attacked him with machetes. His body was already lifeless by the time the last two joined in.' Journalists and UN workers ran to the UN compound for shelter. As one group entered, they turned to watch a young East Timorese set upon by militia. Cornered and armed with just two small rocks, he was brutally kicked and then shot in the head at point blank range. His body was then hacked to pieces with a machete. Such events were repeated in Dili throughout the next week, accompanied by widespread burning and looting of houses and offices.¹

Two days after the referendum, 20 people had died there and 200 houses were burning. In Suai militias lobbed grenades into the church, then fired indiscriminately into the seminary: 'Young Father Dewanto was the first to die', said Sister Mary Barudero. The militiamen had lined up outside the old wooden church, filled with refugees. Parishioners watched as the young Indonesian Jesuit stepped out. A burst of gunfire cut him down. Father Francisco followed. The militiamen waited for the senior parish priest, Father Hilario. When he did not emerge they kicked down the door to his study and sprayed him with automatic weapons fire.' In the church about 100 people were killed.²

On 4 September Kofi Annan announced to the world the results of the ballot. After an election that was relatively free of the intimidation and violence that had

¹ John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom*, (London, 1999), pp. xxv

² *Ibid.*

characterized the activities of the pro-integrationist militias in the previous fourth months, 78.5 per cent of registered voters had decided for independence. Immediately after the result was announced, rampaging militiamen began killing key figures in the independence movement and terrorizing civilians. Witnesses on the ground estimated that in a matter of days over 1,000 lives had been lost. Although President Habibie gave assurances that the Indonesia military and police units on the island would restore order, it rapidly became clear that he was in no position to control event on the ground. Consequently, any ending of the violence depended upon deploying a peacekeeping force onto the island. As early as 4 September, the East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmão, under house arrest in Jakarta, had urged the Secretary-General and the Security Council to make a decision on sending an international force to save the Maubere from a new genocide³.

Six days after the referendum, little was left of Dili, and most of its population had either fled to the hills or been transported by paramilitaries to West Timor by trucks or boats sailing from Dili harbour. A Portuguese journalist described Dili as 'a ghost city. Everything is destroyed, not only the houses but also the apartment buildings, the shops, everything. The only East Timorese people you see are in the police trucks. It's horrible. Dili is dead.' 'We will burn East Timor down and start all over again,' said paramilitary leader, Herminio da Silva Costa.⁴

With estimates of the number of East Timorese being forced into West Timor at the rate of 1,000 per hour, on 6 September what many commentators called "the final place of sanctuary" was attacked. In the aftermath of the initial killings in Dili, 3,000 refugees had sheltered in Bishop Belo's house. On the morning of the 6th it was assaulted by a combined force of militia and Indonesian soldiers. Belo's residence was burned down, and hundred of people marched away. Thirty-nine were reported killed. As Belo was taken by police to a helicopter bound for Baucau, the Dili office of the International

³ Wheeler, Nicholas J. and Tim Dunne, "East Timor and the new humanitarian interventionism", *International Affairs*, Vol.77, No.4, 2001, pp. 815-816.

⁴ Geoffery Robinson, "With Unamet in East Timor: A Historian's Personal View", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* vol.32, no.1&2, Jan-June, 2000, p.25.

Committee of the Red Cross was subjected to a two-hour barrage of automatic gunfire, aimed over the heads of 1,500 refugees sheltering there. The attackers then burst in, pointing their guns at the women and children, who were forced outside, with 200 being marched off to an unknown destination. As the Red Cross compound came under attack, paramilitaries went from house to house in Dili, dragging out suspected independence supporters. At the end of 6 September, UN officials estimated that, in the week since the referendum, 150,000 people had been driven to take shelter in schools, churches and public buildings, 25,000 of them in Dili alone.⁵

The violence following the referendum became front-page news in every Australian newspaper, and television pictures of the atrocities galvanized the Australian public into demanding action to end the violence. A major factor behind this public reaction was the sense of shame at Australia's continuing betrayal of the people of East Timor; support for an armed intervention to protect the East Timorese was a way of trying to absolve the country of its past guilt. Political leaders were equally shocked by the scale of the humanitarian crisis and were intensely frustrated that their method of attempting to avoid violence had failed. More specifically, the Howard government was vulnerable on whether more should have been done to press the Indonesians on security during the ballot process. The opposition Labor party leader, Kim Beazley, had criticized the government on this very issue over the previous four months, and when the violence erupted he levelled the accusation that the Howard government was 'totally ill-prepared to respond positively'. Nevertheless, Howard's decision to champion the cause of military intervention reflected a strong desire to defuse domestic criticisms over his handling of the East Timor question. Faced with a mounting tide of public anger, downer announced on 5 September that Australia was prepared to lead a multinational force to East Timor.

In terms of coercive leverage, on 9 September US President Clinton ratcheted up the pressure by ordering a suspension of all programmes of military cooperation with

⁵ Sue Downie, "The United Nations in East Timor: Comparisons with Cambodia", in Damien Kingsbury, ed., *Guns and Ballot Boxes: East Timor's Vote for Independence* (Victoria, 2000), p.120.

Indonesia. Given the US role in training and supplying the TNI's special forces that were collaborating with the militias, the administration was politically vulnerable on this issue. Senior US officers had tried to exploit their privileged relationship with the Indonesian military by privately persuading them to end the violence. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry H. Shelton, had urged this course of action on Wiranto during two telephone conversations. Admiral Dennis Blair, head of US Pacific forces, had gone to Jakarta to meet with Wiranto on 8 September, with the threat that either the military take control of the situation or the US would break off military relations. Clinton's public statement the following day reflected the failure of this ultimatum to influence the actions of the TNI in East Timor.

The US decision to suspend military cooperation was followed by New Zealand, and the net was further tightened with the EU decision to impose an arms embargo on Indonesia. As part of this, the British foreign secretary announced that the government was suspending shipment of the nine Hawk 'trainer' aircraft that Indonesia was contracted to buy from British Aerospace. Having been given assurances by the Indonesian government that the Hawks already sold to Indonesia would not be used over East Timor, the Blair government found itself in the uncomfortable position of having to explain why it was that these aircraft were operating over East Timor during the crisis.

Military sanctions were one instrument for exerting pressure on the Habibie government, but the most effective weapon in squeezing Indonesia was the threat of financial sanctions. In his speech of 9 September, Clinton raised the spectre of US action to prevent Indonesia obtaining much-needed IMF and World Bank loans. He stated that his 'own willingness to support future assistance will depend very strongly on the way Indonesia handles this situation'. The President wanted to send a clear signal to political and military leaders in Indonesia that if the violence continued, 'There will be overwhelming public sentiment to stop the international economic cooperation...nobody

is going to want to continue to invest there if they are allowing this sort of travesty to go on.’⁶

One of the most fascinating and controversial aspects of this crisis was the role played by the IMF and World Bank in coercing Indonesia into accepting an international peacekeeping force. In an unprecedented move, the IMF announced two days after Clinton’s call for cuts in international lending that it was suspending its planned visit to review Indonesia’s progress, necessary before the next instalment of US\$450 million could be approved. In total, the IMF rescue package for Indonesia was \$12.3 billion, of which \$2.3 billion still had to be granted.

Five days later, the World Bank froze its \$1 billion aid programme to Indonesia in a move designed to put pressure on the government to end the violence in East Timor. This move was justified as a response to a banking scandal, but this was little more than a pretext: the Australian director, James Wolfenson, had written to Habibie the previous week urging the government to honour the results of the referendum. The economic threat posed to Indonesia’s recovery by the loss of IMF and World Bank finance was compounded by the fact that this would send a clear signal to investors that Indonesia was a bad risk, leading to greater pressure on the stability of the currency. The growing realization that the crisis in East Timor was worsening was a key factor in Habibie’s decision on 12 September to agree to the deployment of a multinational force.⁷

Reacting quickly to the violence and total breakdown of law and order, and in response to the outcry of international condemnation, the UN Security Council acted decisively and unanimously, to authorize a peace enforcement force under Resolution 1264 of 15 September. The mandate was under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and provided the MNF with “all necessary measures” to restore security and deal forcefully

⁶ John Haseman and Angel Rahasa, *The Military and Democracy in Indonesia: Challenges, Politics and Power* (Arlington, 2002), p.66.

⁷ Robert Cribb, “From total people’s defence to massacre: Explaining Indonesian military violence in East Timor”, in Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad, eds., *Roots of Violence in Indonesia* (Singapore, 2002), p.234.

with the militias and it unambiguously allowed for security and deal forcefully with the militias and other threats.⁸

INTERFET was capably led by Major General Peter Cosgrove, an experienced and highly decorated infantry officer from Australia. Australia was the logical country to lead this force, having for many years maintained ready deployable forces for a range of short-notice contingencies throughout the region. But Australia's willingness to lead the coalition was conditional on Indonesian consent, which the UN eventually acquired. Both Indonesia and Australia were keen, in fact, to ensure that INTERFET's deployment was successful and that military action to restore security would not inadvertently lead to conflict between INTERFET and the Indonesian security forces still deployed in East Timor. From 14 to 16 September, high-level military discussions were conducted at the UN Secretariat in New York between Indonesia and Australia to ensure that procedures were in place and that the two field commanders, Major General Cosgrove and Major General Kiki Syahnakri, were in agreement and committed to the success of the operation.

INTERFET began its deployment in Dili on 20 September. By the end of September, the force headquarters was fully operational in the burnt-out public library in Dili, and more than 4,000 troops had been deployed. Cosgrove took extreme risk by arriving with only the sponsorship of the UN and the endorsement of his regional partners as protection, yet he did so because of a particularly acute sense of the military and political necessity in East Timor at the time. Indonesian forces would still greatly outnumber his coalition troops for several days and the lawlessness of a rampaging militia would pose threats for weeks, yet General Cosgrove's adroit handling of this situation ensured the success of his unique mission- Operation 'Stabilise'.⁹

⁸ Michael G. Smith and Moreen Dee, *Peacekeeping in East Timor: The Path to Independence* (London, 2003) p.45.

⁹ John R. Ballard, "Mastering Coalition Command in Modern Peace Operations: Operation 'Stabilise' in East Timor", *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (London) vol.13, no.1, Spring 2002, p.81.

In the first six weeks of its deployment, INTERFET progressively restored security in all districts, assuming de facto responsibility for governance and the rule of law until the UN's presence could be effectively re-established. By 1 November, a force of over 8,200 was operating throughout the entire country (including the Oecussi enclave), and security had been totally restored. As the coalition strengthened and more forces arrived, INTERFET continued to maintain security, countered militia activity, and maintained liaison with the TNI to manage the border following the TNI's final withdrawal from East Timor on 1 November. Twenty-two countries contributed to INTERFET, which at its zenith numbered around 11,000 troops. As the lead nation, Australia provided the core element of the force headquarters, much of the aviation and logistics support, and approximately 5,000 troops.

Meanwhile, in the post-August 1999 referendum period Australian pressure on Japan to bankroll the nation-building process created tension between Canberra and Tokyo. Principal factors behind the tension were contrasting views on how to deal with Indonesia in relation to East Timor and Japanese reluctance to pursue 'cheque-book diplomacy' as a result of the 1991 Gulf War experience. The unease over East Timor caused some strain in bilateral ties. Adept Australian diplomacy and Japan's decision to send Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) troops to East Timor, however, 'set relations back on track. Australian officials capitalised on this decision by providing Japan with information on conditions in East Timor and expertise on peacekeeping operations as part of the preparation for sending PKO troops.'¹⁰

On the other hand, in Thailand, news of Australian led INTERFET arrived hot on the heels of press concerns about the level of violence being threatened by Australian troops in Dili. Unlike Malaysia, whose INTERFET commitment was purely nominal, Thailand had promised 1,500 troops, including the deputy commander of the whole mission. Furthermore, that deployment had not been politically unproblematic, and it

¹⁰ David Walton, "Japan and East Timor: Implications for the Australia-Japan Relationship", *Japanese Studies* vol.24, no.2, September 2004, pp.233-234.

would continue to be the subject of substantial domestic criticism both in the parliament and the national press.

In the initial stages of deployment, INTERFET's combat power came mainly from Australia's 3rd Brigade and the Special Air Services Regiment, both of which had trained together since the early 1980s for arrange of short-notice contingencies. Since World War I, the Australian and New Zealand armies had established and maintained a strong relationship, and during recent years the New Zealand army had regularly provided a battalion for combined exercises with 3rd Brigade. Accordingly, a 'Kiwi' battalion was quickly added to the force. Additional infantry troops included a British Gurkha company from Brunei and a Canadian company. There was also the added advantage that these countries, along with the United States, which provided logistics' support and intelligence capabilities, had worked closely together over many years as part of the combined armies 'ABCA' interoperability program. To this core were added capable forces from France, Italy, Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, all of which greatly strengthened the coalition and sent a potent political, as well as military, message to the militias and their supporters. Toward the end of INTERFET's operation, a company group from Kenya, a battalion from Jordan, and medical staff from Egypt were successfully deployed in preparation for transition to the PKF.¹¹

A major factor that contributed to alleviating the burden on the MNF (Multi-national Forces) to restore and maintain security was the behaviour of FALINTIL . This was exemplary throughout the period of violence in the lead-up to, and following the ballot. In preparation for the ballot, and as a mark of good faith in the peace process, the resistance force cantoned itself in four locations and agreed not to conduct military operations or carry weapons outside these cantonments. But fearing both TNI and militia action, FALINTIL refused requests to disarm and surrender its weapons, and as the militia rampage gained momentum, force numbers increased rapidly to around 1,500-2,000. Nonetheless, led impressively by Taur Matan Ruak, FALINTIL kept to its

¹¹ Richard Leaver, "Introduction: Australia, East Timor and Indonesia", *Pacific Review*, vol.14, no.1, 2001, p.3

agreement and its actions quickly won the respect of UNAMET. IN an amazing act of restraint and strategic vision, Ruak resisted calls from some of his field commanders to fight the militias. Backing the wishes of his commander in chief, Xanana Gusmão, and further requests from Jose Ramos-Horta, Ruak ordered his commanders to remain cantoned and to ensure their own security in readiness for the next phase of operations.

On 25 October 1999, the Security Council authorized the establishment of United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAET) under Resolution 1272, and the Secretary-General appointed the highly regarded Sergio Vieira de Mello from Brazil as SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General). UNTAET was assigned certain tasks to be accomplished by the Security Council of the UN as follows:

- To provide security and maintain law and order throughout the territory of East Timor;
- To establish an effective administration;
- To assist in the development of civil and social services;
- To ensure the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, and development assistance;
- To support capacity-building for self-government; and
- To assist in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.¹²

Although this was not the first occasion on which the UN had acted in a transitional capacity, the depth and breadth of its responsibilities in East Timor surpassed previous missions. Here, in addition to an uncertain security situation, the infrastructure was almost totally destroyed and the population dislocated. To all intent, UNTAET was to be the de jure government of a broken country. UNTAET assumed responsibility from UNAMET in November 1999, inheriting a small number of experienced UNAMET personnel and what remained of its equipment. INTERFET continued to guarantee security until arrangements for a UN PKF could be finalized, but they remained separate from UNTAET with General Cosgrove and Vieira de Mello working in close

¹² Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen R. Shalom, "East Timor Faces the Future", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 32, Nos. 1 and 2, 2000, p. 113.

collaboration. However, in contrast to UNAMET and INTERFET, UNTAET was slow to get started. The UN Secretariat's resources had been fully committed to the ballot and then to authorizing the MNF.

Most of the planning had focussed on the military component, with some being undertaken on the requirements for CIVPOL. Virtually no planning occurred regarding the composition and responsibilities of the civil administration and the manner in which UNTAET would work in partnership with the East Timorese. This inadequate situation arose, and was compounded, within the Secretariat, where uncertainty remained for some time as to whether it was the DPA or the DPKO that would take the lead. The DPKO was not confirmed in this role until September. From that point intensive planning did take place, but it took time to identify and select key personnel and staff.¹³

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in its early days chose to retain the system of the former Indonesian administration. In addition to a central authority at the national level, it set up district administrations in, what had become under Indonesian rule, thirteen districts. The main links of these district administrations to the lowest levels of society were through the international District Field Officer (DFO), who consulted with the population at the sub-district level and coordinated governmental matters with the village chiefs. The DFOs, therefore, played a crucial role in forming the local perception of UNTAET at the local level. They were mostly respected because of their "high" position, but many people felt that they did not have sufficient cultural knowledge. At the same time, a parallel local structure was re-established by the Council for National Resistance in Timor (CNRT), based on the existing clandestine structure. At the district, sub-district, village and hamlet levels, representatives were recruited mainly through the leaders of the former clandestine and FALINTIL structures.

¹³ Tanja Hohe, "The Clash of Paradigms: International administration and Local Political Legitimacy in East Timor," *Contemporary South East Asia*, vol.24, no.3, December 2002, p.579

Many sub-districts chiefs or village chiefs of the transitional period were not elected democratically but appointed by FALINTIL, the CNRT, and village elders. There was, in most cases, an agreement between the CNRT and FALINTIL about whom to appoint. In conjunction with this, the village elders gathered to discuss the appointment according to the local concept of political authority. Village elders stated that the appointment was decided by them, but had to be confirmed by the CNRT and FALINTIL. The criteria used were the person's descent, his activities in the clandestine movement, former communal activities and possible detainment by the TNI, and his ability as a leader in conflict resolution.¹⁴

In February 2000, marking the complete deployment of UNTAET, command of military operations was transferred from INTERFET to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force. UNTAET also began a process of reorganizing itself to resemble more closely the future government of East Timor and to increase the direct participation of the East Timorese. Eight portfolios were created: internal administration, infrastructure, economic affairs, social affairs, finance, justice, police and emergency services, and political affairs. The first four were headed by East Timorese and the other four by senior UNTAET officials. The process of transformation and institution building later led to the establishment, in August 2000, of the East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA) headed by the Transitional Administrator.

On 5 April 2000, the SRSG announced the appointment of Timorese deputy District administrator to operate under the 13 international district administrators. In addition, new district advisory councils would be established. These were to have broad participation of representatives of political parties, the Church, women and youth groups. In particular, the SRSG noted, 'We wish to establish advisory councils in the districts that are representative of the East Timorese civil society more than was possible in the NCC'. In addition, he announced that proceedings of the NCC, which had been criticized by

¹⁴ Ibid., p.580.

some as overtly secretive, would be opened to the representatives of the NGO's and of FALINTIL.¹⁵

The criticisms of UNTAET in Dili were echoed and amplified in the 13 districts, where the administrators complained of their exclusion from policy decisions. In response to the criticism, in May 2000, the SRSB presented two options to Timorese leaders. The first model was a 'technocratic model', by which the administration would be fully staffed with East Timorese, so a fully national civil service would be in place at independence. The second was a 'political model', whereby East Timorese would also share responsibility for government in coalition with UNTAET and hold several portfolios in the interim government. The latter model was chosen, and a National Council (NC) was established by a regulation passed on 14 July 2000.

Meanwhile, during the first six months of 2000, more than 167,000 refugees returned from Indonesia, primarily from West Timor, with an estimated 85,000 to 120,000 remaining in camps in West Timor. However, in September, a series of armed attacks against United Nations troops and East Timorese people along the border and in refugee camps in West Timor led UNTAET to declare western zones to be 'high threat' areas. Following the murder of three United Nations staff members in Atambua, West Timor, by armed militias on 6 September 2000; humanitarian relief efforts in the region were suspended.¹⁶

The United Nations Security Council responded to the deteriorating security situation by adopting resolution 1319 on 8 September 2000. The resolution called on the Government of Indonesia to take immediate steps, in fulfilment of its responsibilities, to disarm and disband militia immediately, restore law and order in the affected areas in West Timor, ensure safety and security in the refugee camps and for humanitarian workers, and prevent cross-border incursions into East Timor.

¹⁵ Simon Chesterman, 'East Timor in Transition: Self-determination, State-building and United Nations', *International Peacekeeping*, vol.9, no.1, Spring 2002, p.65.

¹⁶ Hohe, n.13, p.586.

In addition to the planned expansion of the East Timor Police Service, on 12 September 2000, the Transitional Cabinet approved the creation of an East Timor Defence Force consisting of 1,500 troops drawn from the ranks of the former East Timorese pro-independence guerrilla force FALINTIL and supplemented by a reserve of equal number. Running parallel to efforts towards maintaining peace and security in East Timor were measures aimed at developing a functioning judicial and legal system. An East Timorese Prosecutor General's Office and a Defender Service; 3 District Courts; a Court of Appeals, and prisons in Dili and two other locations were established in the course of 2000.

In October 2000, a National Council (NC) was established to replace and expand on the former National Consultative Council (NCC) as the nucleus of a future assembly. It comprised 36 members from East Timorese civil society - businesses, political parties, NGOs, and the territory's 13 districts. East Timorese were appointed to five of nine cabinet portfolios.

After Habibie, Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri consistently acknowledged East Timor's independence and the legitimate role of the UN as transitional administrators. The TNI, once INTERFET was deployed, also cooperated in a joint effort to prevent the escalation of hostilities. The relationship established between the TNI and INTERFET/PKF leadership greatly assisted the containment of the militia problem, even if it did not succeed in fully resolving it.¹⁷ This cooperation enabled joint border control mechanisms to be put in place to reduce the possibility of border clashes. Three important areas in which Indonesia was slow to act, however, were in resolving the refugee/militia problem in West Timor; bringing to trial those Indonesians accused of human rights violations; and demarcating the land and maritime borders.

Governance and Public Administration (GPA), led stoically by the experienced French prefect Jean-Christian Cady, who was also appointed as deputy SRSG. This was

¹⁷ Peter Zinoman and Nancy Lee Peluso, "Rethinking Aspects of Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Indonesia and East Timor", *Asian Survey*, vol.XLII, no.4, July/August, 2002, p.548.

responsible for re-establishing governance at the central and district levels, for regenerating public and social utilities, for establishing the rule of law, and for encouraging and regulating investment in the private sector. This was an enormous task, and more so given the total destruction of the territory's infrastructure and the failure of the UN to provide an overarching strategic (corporate) plans. Political and foreign policy issues were nominally part of GPA also, but in reality these were handled directly by the SRSG and his Head of Political Affairs, Peter Galbraith, former U.S. ambassador to Croatia. The police commissioner was subordinated to Cady and unlike the force commander, did not have a major role in the decision-making process.

GPA faced three particular challenges: creating a sustainable budget, developing a larger and more experienced staff, and winning the confidence of the East Timorese. Budget and funding arrangements were complicated. The distinction between the use of assessed and trust fund contributions often seemed blurred, and the flexibility of the SRSG to utilize funds in the best way seemed often to be constrained by UN fiduciary procedures. Bureaucratic constraints in the use of the assessed and trust fund budgets also impeded efficiency. The SRSG was often limited in the assistance he could provide to reconstruction activities because these could not be authorized under extant regulations for the assessed budget. From the military perspective, this meant that engineer units, which had specifically been included in the force to assist with reconstruction, were often under utilized because material could be procured quickly under assessed budget arrangements.

Recruitment and funding for the civil service were major difficulties that required immediate attention. Replication of the large Indonesian civil service would have been economically unsustainable under UNTAET, or later by the newly independent country. Additionally, many civil servants had departed following the ballot and there were few trained personnel available for selection. Again, the UN Secretariat's failure to plan adequately for a civil administration caused problems due to shortages in international civil staff; and these problems were compounded by the appointment of underqualified or unsuitable personnel for some of the important positions. UNTAET proved to be an

'unattractive' mission for many UN civil servants, and consequently it suffered from high vacancy and separation rates.

As the months progressed, the slow pace of reconstruction and other aspects of UNTAET's presence were subject to increased local and international criticism. The UN was accused of saturating Dili with vehicles and personnel, creating an artificial and unsustainable local economy—a situation that did little for the East Timorese. The GPA was seen to be too Dili-centric in its attention, evoking criticism from, district administrators, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and East Timorese leaders. District administrators found themselves allocated paltry resources and left too much to their own devices to implement governance and enhance development. The initiative some of these officials displayed was admirable, but their efforts suffered from the lack of an overall working plan. Locally engaged UN workers became discontent with perceived inequities in the UN salary system and with their working conditions.

UNTAET had difficulty in explaining its proposals to remedy these situations to the population largely because, like in so many other areas, its branch of the UN's Office of Communications and Public Information (OCPI) remained poorly resourced for many months. Consequently, a coordinated information program was not implemented throughout the mission until early 2001. The SRSG's intention to establish nationwide radio coverage as quickly as possible, as the most sensible means of communicating with the East Timorese people, was also not finally realized until April 2001.

In July 2000, GPA was replaced by the East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA). This was a major change in the transitional process, reversing the philosophy on how the transition should be managed. GPA had started by addressing "Timorization" at the administrative level, with political transformation to come nearer the proposed national elections. ETTA was structured to begin the political transition earlier, the rationale being that a state cannot be prepared for self-government without giving the national leadership direct experience of government. In accordance with the mandate, the SRSG remained in charge (with Cady as his deputy), but a transitional cabinet that

comprised nine de facto ministries was created. Five were headed by East Timorese and four by international staff. The transition from GPA to ETTA was an important step on the path to independence, but it did not come without tension.¹⁸

True to its word, and in preparation for the “all Timorese” Constituent Assembly elections on 30 August 2001 (the second anniversary of the ballot), the CNRT was dissolved on 9 June 2001 to allow parties to contest the elections. The CNRT had provided unity and focus throughout a long and difficult period, but its task was complete with the decision to hold elections. The Constituent Assembly election was peaceful and well planned, resulting in the swearing-in of the eighty-eight members of the assembly on 15 September fifty-five of whom came from the dominant FRETILIN party. After dealing with its own rules and procedures, the assembly commenced drafting the constitution. On 20 September, the all Timorese Second Transitional Government was confirmed, made up of twenty ministers, vice-ministers, and secretaries of state. A Council of Ministers, led by Chief Minister Mari Alkatiri, presided over this transitional government and supervised the East Timor Public Administration, which replaced ETTA and by mid-September had recruited 90 percent of its 10,500 civil servants. Although still under the overall authority of the SRSG, the Timorization process progressed a long way, with East Timor under the effective control of its own people. The date for East Timor’s independence was set for 20 May 2002.¹⁹

The transition from INTERFET to the PKF was set to take place during February 2000. To maintain a secure environment for the process of nation building, it was important that this transition be handled well and that the PKF then prove itself capable of continuing the high standard set by the MNF. Overall, the transition progressed smoothly; aided by the fact that 0 percent of the deployed forces remained in location and changed to UN blue headdress.

¹⁸ Smith & Dee, n.8, p.65.

¹⁹ Chesterman, n.15, p.66.

For the East Timorese, the transition appeared seamless, but some risks and gaps emerged in force capability. Although the DPKO had begun planning for a PKF many months before-subsequently the basis for the INTERFET deployment by necessity the DPKO focused its efforts from September on establishing the civil administration. The PKF force commander, Lieutenant General Jaime de los Santos from the Philippines, was not appointed until 30 December. In these circumstances it was largely left to Australia and General Cosgrove to determine and dictate the transition strategy and timetable. Australia also agreed to bridge the gap in logistics support until the UN administrative system was fully functional.

More than thirty countries contributed to the PKF, with the main combat forces coming from ten countries. In the early days of UNTAET, the SRSG decided to separate the military and the police and to make a clear distinction between military security matters and those of law enforcement. From the outset, therefore, the PKF and CIVPOL remained distinct entities, with a conscious decision being taken not to replicate the military predominance that had existed under the Indonesians. In many post conflict environments an important step in maintaining security is to establish effective border control mechanisms- land, air and maritime. In East Timor this was quickly accomplished for land and air boundaries between military forces, but agreement on maritime boundaries and the establishment of sustainable political mechanisms proved more difficult.²⁰

On 12 January 2000, INTERFET and the TNI reached agreement on a memorandum of (technical) understanding (MOU) to control the border and minimize the risks of unintended conflict between the two sides. In the absence of an approved international border, a tactical coordination line (TCL) was agreed, based on the old Dutch-Portuguese borders. Both sides set about improving the delineation of the TCL, which was porous and poorly marked. Each party agreed to respect the TCL and to discourage retaliatory militia violence.

²⁰ Irena Christalis, *Bitter Dawn: East Timor, A People's Story* (London, 2002) p.288.

The sensitivities surrounding the future of FALINTIL were clearly visible with the triumphant return from house arrest in October 1999 of Xanana Gusmao, FALINTIL's commander in chief, in full military uniform. The difficulty in resolving FALINTIL's status was further evident when, on 19 November, Gusmao attended a meeting in Dili with the newly arrived SRSG accompanied by a group of heavily armed bodyguards in clear breach of the cantonment agreement. General Cosgrove and Vieira de Mello were able to defuse a tense situation, with Gusmao agreeing to disarm his protection party and again allow INTERFET to provide for his safety. Subsequently, there were two further incidents, in May and June 2000, when elements of FALINTIL again broke cantonment, further highlighting the need to settle the future status for the popular freedom fighters.

After considerable negotiation, including an independent international study by a team from King's College London, it was agreed that East Timor should have a modest light infantry force of two battalions, comprising 1,500 regulars and 1,500 volunteer reservists. (A small component of fifty personnel and two patrol craft were later added with provisioning from Portugal). The UN was given responsibility to commence preparation of the ETDF before independence. Six hundred and fifty FALINTIL members were selected for the first battalion, and those not selected were reintegrated into society under the FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Programme, funded by the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). With this closure of its cantonment, FALINTIL surrendered most of its weapons to UNTAET, retaining some small arms for training purposes under ETDF security arrangements.²¹

In retrospect, the creation of the ETDF and its transition from FALINTIL was a difficult exercise, but one that helped cement an effective partnership between the UN and the East Timorese. In UNTAET's difficult first year, a seemingly intractable problem had been resolved. In the process, the UN broke new ground in conflict resolution and

²¹ Centre for Defence Studies, *Independent Study on Security Force Options and Security Sector Reform for East Timor* (London, 2000) p.5.

gained valuable experience. The key to the success rested upon the commitment and discipline of FALINTIL, the watchful assistance and advice of the PKF, the UN's flexibility, and the diplomatic and financial support from Australia and Portugal.

One of the greatest challenges facing UNTAET was to restore an effective judicial system quickly and thereby establish the rule of law. Indonesian law, with which the East Timorese were familiar, was quickly reinstated as the norm, with necessary modification to ensure UN conventions on human rights. It was not the law that was the major problem but rather the ability of the transitional administration to implement it effectively. The justice sector was slow to get started, and it progressed incrementally under difficult circumstances and with limited resources. In practical terms, the general human rights issues for the emerging nation were appropriately handled on a case-by-case basis, although, here again, a lack of mission planning soon became evident. The human rights coordinator arrived in the mission without a budget or adequate staff.

Both the UN and Indonesia conducted some notable work to identify possible war criminals, but progress to bring to account those identified was slow. This was not surprising considering the stature and influence still exerted in Indonesia by some senior military officers and militia leaders who had been implicated. At the same time, however, while eventual justice was seen to be important by some East Timorese leaders, there was also a sense that this should not impede reconciliation for the majority of displaced people languishing in refugee camps in West Timor. The issue of reconciliation was important and difficult to delineate, as the East Timorese remained divided on the subject. In an effort to encourage the refugees to return from West Timor, Xanana Gusmao, supported by Taur Matan Ruak and Bishop Nascimento, advocated clemency, even amnesty, to returning militia leaders. UNTAET's position remained that all refugees were welcome to return but that there would be no amnesty for crimes committed in 1999 and that suspects would face the East Timor justice system.

A Serious Crimes Investigation Unit was created, but it was described by staff members as suffering from "mismanagement, weak leadership, and inadequate

resources” and, according to one of the unit’s former prosecutors, “the criminal justice system has become the black mark on the UN Mission’s record in East Timor.”²² The militias’ activities hindered UNHCR’s efforts to implement its resettlement program, but a comprehensive plan was activated nonetheless, which included the establishment of refugee holding centres, “look and see” visits, and family reunion meetings. UNHCR’s program was more successful in the special arrangements made for the reception and reintegration of returnees within their communities. Occasional problems occurred, but generally the resettlement went smoothly. The East Timorese themselves made a clear distinction between key militia personalities and the vast majority of the population they accepted as bystanders. Most of the credit for this peaceful reintegration goes to the people and to the positive role-played by the church and the CNRT, who actively campaigned for peace and forgiveness. Xanana Gusmao’s leadership in advocating assistance and forgiveness to those returning was generally heeded by the people.

By July 2000, approximately 170,000 refugees had been returned successfully and resettled with few difficulties. By late October 2001, UNHCR in partnership with IOM and UNTAET had helped some 188,646 refugees return to East Timor, but an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 still remained in Indonesia.

World Bank deserves great credit for its assistance to East Timor. Led by its energetic and competent coordinator, Sarah Cliffe, it quickly established close relations with the East Timorese and, from the outset, engaged them fully in development planning and in the decision making process. As early as 21 February 2000, World Bank president James Wolfenson, Xanana Gusmao, and the SRSR signed a grant agreement for the disbursement of US\$21.5 million over two-and-half years for community empowerment and local government projects. Funds were provided through the Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET), with grants for economic reconstruction and development activities prepared and supervised by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. In January 2002, international pledges to the fund amounted to US \$167.5 million. Acting as trustee for the TFET, the World Bank played a key role in helping maintain international

²² Elizabeth Neuffer, “Slaughter and Suspects Elude UN’s Reach”, *Boston Globe*, (2001) February, p.6.

support for East Timor. It also worked closely with UNTAET's professional Donor Coordination Unit in preparing the background papers for the regular international donor conferences. The early involvement and role of Bretton Woods institutions in the planning and execution of future postconflict missions also need to be boosted and the lessons from East Timor will be particularly instructive. All these helped East Timor to achieve its ultimate independence in 20 May 2002.

CONCLUSION

After the discussion of the East Timorese history it becomes clear that East Timorese history it seems clear that East Timor for a long time became a ball to be played by different powers. The fate of the independent status of East Timor depended on the discretion of the mighty powerful nations. Nobody wants to antagonise a mighty power, which was Indonesia, because the country with the fourth largest population in the world was very important economically and strategically. Also as a regional power Indonesia had a big say in ASEAN, and was also geographically the nearest to Australia which was another big power in the region. It was the fate of East Timor that it was surrounded by two big powers, which made its existence almost negligible physically. The most prestigious natural resource, which Indonesia had, was its oil deposits. Indonesia had been eyeing that part because the acquisition of East Timor would add much to the natural resource of Indonesian kitty. Also, East Timor was good to invest for plantation.

Another fear that Indonesia was keen about, was the independent existence of East Timor would boost the other secessionist movements which had been troubling Indonesia since its independence. Thus, the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitton said that the independent East Timor is not a viable state. Australia, on the other hand, did not want to oppose Indonesia on siding with East Timor because Indonesia was a large trading partner of Australia and also because Australia could bargain for the Timor gap with Indonesia, while an independent East Timor was not.

US were another great power who was very supportive of the East Timor acquisition. Indonesia was one of the largest buyer of the US weapons and US never wanted to jeopardise its relation with Indonesia because it would hurt the US arms trade. Throughout the period of Indonesian occupation of East Timor, US was the major supplier for Indonesian arms. It was only after the sanction by Ford that Indonesia took the gauntlet against East Timor. Even the Australian prime minister was taken by his side before taking to serious measure against East Timor.

ASEAN was another regional organization, which kept its silence throughout the period because Indonesia was the one member of ASEAN, as Indonesia-ASEAN relation could not have been put to trouble on the pretext of such a small country. Also most of the ASEAN members were also facing their own secessionist movements. UN was the only organization, which could have solved the problem at the earliest, but the irony of UN is that it can pass resolutions but could not take actions of its own. Throughout the Indonesian occupation, UN passed numerous resolutions but could not take course to any action.

It was the downfall of Suharto along with the Asian crisis that left Indonesia with the begging bowl. This was the right time to strike and Australia took the chance to lead from the front and shut their critics. Throughout the entire period of Indonesian occupation the Australian press did not miss any chance to criticize the policy of supporting Indonesia. This was one of the main reasons to silent the critique that always dubbed Australia as 'American stooge'.

After decades of struggle East Timorese could ultimately exercise their power of self-determination in mid-1999. Although many claim, with some justification, that the international response was too late, when it did come in late September 1999, it had the almost immediate effects of dispersing the militias to the Indonesian side of the land. With decades of struggle the army was exhausted of fighting for a piece of land, which fetched more criticism than accolades. Finally, after the withdrawal of the Indonesian troops and the restoration of peace the East Timorese who had fled to the mountains or across the border, began tickle back to their villages and towns and in most cases to find them destroyed. But to think of their trauma, to see the return of their smiles, and listen to their enthusiasm, is to believe that there are grounds for hope.

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