Timor-Leste in the World
BC to Independence
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Cover: Wood carvings from Ataúro. Photo by Sussa Stubbergaard
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Preface

In July 1973 I arrived at Baucau in then Portuguese Timor, from Darwin, Australia, on the first stop of an overland trip to Europe. After finding accommodation I sat down at a table and ordered a beer. I will always remember my sense of bewilderment, when I realised that the stuff I was drinking, a well tasting brew called Laurentina, had taken its name from its place of production, Laurenco Marques, Mozambique. Part of this story is that Darwin at that time supposedly was (maybe still is?) “the beer drinking capital of the world”. It seemed wondrous that just a short flight away from such a frothy place, the beer would be imported from Africa, thousands and thousands of kilometres away.

I also recall the dramatically beautiful scenery later on the road from Baucau to Dili, the capital, and the fragrant aromas in the air, the sudden nightfalls, the friendly population greeting me with “hello” and “bye-bye”, the stay – one dollar for one week - at the so called ‘Hippie Hilton’ in Dili: a concrete floor, three walls and a roof, with one side open towards the sea, offering the scenery of the neighbouring island, Ataúro. One evening at Restaurant Baucau I met up with a bunch of young Timorese and ended up jamming on guitar together with them at somebody’s house. If I remember correctly, they had a band together called The Lords. I was young, it was all fun, and I had absolutely no idea of past or recent history of Timor, or that in front of the government building young locals were planning a future for a non-Portuguese Timor. After idling away a week or two in pleasant fashion, I eventually found a way to travel on to the tiny Portuguese enclave Oé-Cusse on the western part of the island. From there it was a long and rather uncomfortable ride on top of a crowded Bedford truck to Kupang, the bustling capital of West Timor. Months later I ended up in Sweden; years later the most vivid memories of the whole trip were those from Timor.

Thus, when a local newspaper in late 1975 very briefly wrote that Portuguese Timor had been invaded by Indonesia, I tried to find out more about it. I consulted the major papers, I went to the international press, but nobody had much to offer. Again I had a sense of bewilderment – but this time it was not funny at all – when I later read that the invasion had cost some 50.000 lives. The horrendous number stood in sharp contrast to the always short newspaper notices.

Eventually I got hold of more substantial information, largely thanks to the various small East Timor support groups established in an increasing number of countries, including my own. And then there were the works by Jill Jolliffe, Helen Hill, Bill Nicol, Arnold Kohen, John Taylor & James Dunn; eyewitness accounts and/or historical analyses of the period leading up to the invasion, and, not the least, Kevin Sherlock’s *A Bibliography of Timor*. With the aid of this bibliography and an extremely helpful staff at the Lund University Library, I slowly amassed copies of writings on Timor, including an article by James Fox. This article prompted me to write a letter to Mr Fox, and in his kind answer he advised me to get in touch with Patsy Thatcher in Melbourne; she hasn’t got rid of me yet! Patsy introduced me to the two Guterres, Justino and Abel (no relatives) and from there on a snowball effect took over. There is no way I can thank all those, and countless others, who helped me along the way. I’m proud to call some of them my friends – and even heroes. I won’t specify the latter category; they wouldn’t forgive me if I did. As for myself, I would be immensely satisfied if one day
somebody says of me that “he was not himself a discoverer or a particularly original thinker, but rather an assiduous compiler.”

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Glossary

Acronyms and non-English terms – Portuguese unless otherwise stated.
(BI) = Bahasa Indonesia, (T) = Timorese, (D) = Dutch, (J) = Japanese, and (F) = French

ABRI – Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (BI).
AC75 (Associação dos Antigos Combatentes das Falintil, the ex-Falintil Combatants Association.
ACFOA – The Australian Council for Overseas Aid.
Aditla – Associação Democrática para a Integração do Timor-Leste na Austrália, the Democratic Association for Integration of East Timor with Australia.
AIETD – The All-Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogue.
APCET - Asia-Pacific Consultation on East Timor.
APEC - Asia-Pacific Economic Consultation.
Apodeti – Associação Popular Democrática Timorense, Popular Association of Democratic Timor.
ASDT - Associação Social-Democrata Timorense, the Timorese Association of Social Democrats.
ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
AST – Associação Socialista Timorense, the Timorese Socialist Association.
ASTO - Association de Solidarite Avec Timor-Oriental, the Association of solidarity with East Timor (F).
AVR - Associação Veteranos dos Resistencia, Association of Veterans of the Resistance.
Babinsa – Bintara Pembina Desa, Village guidance officer (BI).
Bahasa Indonesia – The national language of Indonesia.
Bandu – traditional rules (T)
Bases de Apoio, support bases within Fretilin-controlled areas
Bases Vermelhas, same as above.
BCET – The British Coalition for East Timor.
Brichoques - Brigadas de Choques, Fretilin shock brigades.
Brimob - Brigade Mobil, the Mobile Brigade (BI).
BRTT - Barisan Rakyat Timor Timur, East Timor’s People’s Front (BI).
Bupati – District Administrator (BI).
Camat – Sub-district administrator (BI).
Carreira da Índia – The annual round voyage which Portuguese ships made between Lisbon and Goa.
CDPM - Comissão para os direitos do Povo Maubere - Commission for the Rights of the Maubere people
Ceforpol - Centro da Formação Política, Centre for Political Training.
CEDAW – Convention on the elimination of discrimination against women.
CEL/FC - *Comité Executivo da Luta/Frente Clandestina*, the Executive Committee of Struggle/Clandestine Front.

CEP - Community Empowerment Program.

CGI – Consultative Group on Indonesia.

*Chefe da Aldeia* - Sub-village chief.

*Chefe do Posto* – District administrator.

*Chefe de Suco* - Village chief.

CIDAC - *Centro de Informação e Documentação Anti-Colonial*, Anti-colonial Center for Documentation and Information.

CIET – Campaign for Independent East Timor.

*Cimeira* – Summit conference.

CIVPOL - UN Civilian Police.


Colégios – Boarding schools.

*Comissário Político* - Fretilin political commissioner.

*Conselhos* – Administrative districts in Portuguese Timor.


*CPLP* – *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*, Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries.


*Criado* – Helper and general assistant. The term is normally used for the East Timorese who helped Australian soldiers during W.W.II.


CSIS – Center for Strategic and International Studies (Jakarta).

*Deportados* – Persons deported to the colonies for political or criminal offences.

*Desa* – Village (BI).

DFAT - The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

DSO – District Field Officer.


DGS – *Direção-Geral de Segurança*, the Portuguese secret police, successor of PIDE.

DOPI - *Departamento da Orientação Política e Ideológica*, Department of Political and Ideological Orientation.

DPA – The UN Department of Political Affairs.

DPKO - The UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations.

DRET - Democratic Republic of East Timor.

DSD - Defence Signals Directorate.

DSMTT - *Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa Timor Timur*, Student Solidarity Council of East Timor (BI).

*Dwi Fungsi* – Dual Function, the doctrine that the Indonesian armed forces has two functions, military and political (BI).


*Estado da Índia* – The Portuguese colonial empire, with the exception of Brazil.

*Estado Novo* – The New State, Salazar’s corporate Republic in Portugal.
Estafeta – The clandestine system of couriers to carry messages out of/into Timor.
ETAN - East Timor Action Network.
ETRA – East Timor Relief Association.
ETTA - East Timor Transitional Administration.
Falintil – Forças Armadas de Libertação do Timor-Leste, the Armed Forces of East Timor National Liberation.
FBOTT - Front Bersama Pro Otonomi Timor Timur, United Front for East Timor Autonomy (BI).
FDPK - Forum Persuatan, Demokrasi Dan Keadilan, Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice (BI).
FDTL - Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste, the East Timor Defence Force.
Feitoria – Trading post, ‘factory’.
Fidalgo – Nobleman.
Fokupers - Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Lorosae, East Timorese Women’s Communications Forum (BI).
Forças de Intervenção, Fretilin intervention forces.
Forças do Setor - Falintil sector forces.
Fortilios – Forum Solidaritas Untuk Rakyat Timor Timur, Solidarity Forum for the People of East Timor (BI).
FPDK - Forum Persuatan, Demokrasi Dan Keadilan, Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice (BI).
FPI - Frente Political Internal, the Internal Political Front.
Frelimo – Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, the Mozambique Liberation Front.
Fretillan - Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente, the Revolutionary Front for East Timor’s Independence.
FVF - Fundacao Veteranos das Falintil, Falintil Veterans Foundation.
Gada Paksi - Garda Pemuda Penegak Integrasi, Youth Guard for Upholding Integration (BI).
Geracão four - The new generation (T).
GPK - Gerombolan Pengacau Keamanan, Gang of security disturbers, the Indonesian term for the Timorese armed resistance (BI).
GFFTL - Grupo Feto Foinsae Timor Lorosae, East Timor Student Women’s Group (T).
Golkar (Golongan Karya) – Functional groups, the Indonesian Government’s political organisation, during the Suharto era.
GRPRTT (Gerakan Rekonsiliasi dan Persuatan Rakyat Timor Timur, the Movement for Reconciliation and Unity of the people of East Timor (BI).
Hansip – Pertahanan Sipil, Civilian defence (BI)
ICIET - International Commission of Inquiry in East Timor.
ICJ – The International Court of Justice.
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP – Internally Displaced Person.
IFET – International Federation for East Timor.
IGGI – The Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia.
IMF – International Monetary Fund.
Imposto de captação – Head tax.
Indische Vereeniging – Indies Association, formed by Indonesian students in the Netherlands in 1908 (D).
InterFET - International force for East Timor.
IOM - International Organization of Migration.
Kabupaten – Administrative district (BI).
Kamra - Keamaan Rakyat, Civil defense units (BI).
Kecamatan – sub-district (BI).
Kodim – Komando Distrik Militer, district military command (BI).
Komnas-HAM - Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, National Commission on Human Rights (BI).
Konfrontasi – Confrontation, Indonesia’s aggressive politics against Malaysia in the Sukarno era (BI).
Kontindo – Kontingen Indonesia Irian Barat, Indonesia’s West Irian Contingent (BI).
Kopassandha - Komando Pasukan Sandi Yudha, Army Special Forces Command, the Red Berets (BI).
Kopassus – Komando Pasukan Khusus, Special Troops Command, the Red Berets (BI).
Kopkamtib - Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (BI).
KPP HAM - Komisi Penyelidik Pelanggaran Hak Asasi Manusia, a Commission of inquiry into human rights violations in East Timor (BI).
Knuu – House-cluster (T).
Korem – Komando Resort Militer Wiradharma, East Timor military headquarter (BI).
Kostrad – Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat, Army Strategic Reserve Command (BI).
Kota - Klirbur Oan Timor Aswain, Sons of the Mountain Warriors or Association of Timorese Heroes (T).
KPS - Komisi Perdamaian dan Stabilitas, Commission for Peace and Stability (BI).
Ladang – Slash and burn cultivation (BI).
LBH – Lembaga Bantuan Hukum, Legal Aid Institute (BI).
Liurai – Traditional ruler (T).
MAC – Movimento Anticomunista, the Anti-Communist Movement, formed by UDT and some smaller parties after their military defeat by FRETILIN in August/September 1975.
Malae – Foerigner, stranger (T)
Menwa - Resimen Mahasiswa, the Student Regiment (BI).
MFA – Movimento das Forças Armadas, the Armed Forces Movement.
MOA - Memorandum of Understanding.
MPLA – Movimento Popular de Libertação da Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.
MPR – Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat. Peoples Consultative Assembly) (BI).
MPTL – Movimento do Povo do Timor-Leste, People’s Movement of East Timor (P).
Nankõ – Nan’yo Kohatsu Kabushiki Kaisha, South Seas Development Company (J).
NCC - National Consultative Council.
NGO – Non-governmental Organization.
Ojetil - Organização da Juventude Estudantil do Timor-Leste, the Organisation of Timorese Youth.
OMT - Organização da Mulher Timorense, the Organisation of Timorese Women.
Operasi Komodo – The Komodo (Dragon) Operation, set up to obstruct the decolonisation process in Portuguese Timor (BI).
OPIT – Organização Popular da Juventude Timorense, the Popular Organisation of Timorese Youth.
OPMT - Organização Popular da Mulher Timorense, the Popular Organisation of Timorese women.
Opsus – ABRI’s (the Indonesian armed forces) special operations unit (BI).
Orde Baru – New Order. The Suharto era in Indonesian politics (BI).
PAIGC – Partido Africano para a Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde.
Parentil - Partido Republika Nacional Timor Leste, National Republic Party of East Timor.

Partindo – Partai Indonesia, the Indonesian Party, formed by a majority of the former PNI (see below) when this party was banned by the Dutch (BI).

PD - Partido Democrático, the Democratic Party.

PDC - Partido Democrata Cristão, the Christian Democrat Party (P).

PDI - Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party (BI).

PDI-P - Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle.

PDKB - Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa, the Indonesian National Christian Democratic Party (BI).

PDM - Partido democrático de Maubere, the Maubere Democratic Party.

PI – Perhimpunan Indonesia, the Indonesian Association, formerly known under its Dutch name Indische Vereeniging. The ideas of the PI played a dominant role in the development of nationalism in Indonesia (BI).

Pide – Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado, the International Police for the Defence of the State, the Portuguese secret police during the Salazar era.

PKI – Perserikaten Kommunist di India, the Communist party of the Indies (BI).

PNI – Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesia’s National Party.

PNI Baru – The New PNI. One of the three new parties which were founded when the Dutch outlawed PNI (BI).

Postos – Administrative units in Portuguese Timor.

Povoação – Village.

PNT - Partido Nacionalista Timorense, Timorese Nationalist Party.

PNTL - Policia Nacional do Timor-Leste, National Police of Timor Leste.

POLRI - Polisi Republik Indonesia, Indonesian National Police (BI).

PPI – Pasukan Pejuang Integrasi, Integration Struggle Troops (BI).

PPP - Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party (BI).

PPT - Partido do Povo do Timor-Leste, People’s Party of Timor.

Presidium Juventude Loriku Aswa’in, The Presidium of Youth Lorikeet Warriors (T).

PRD – Partai Rakyat Demokratik, People’s Democratic Party (BI).

PRSG – Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

Priyayi – The Javanese term for the administrative upper class.

PSD - Partido Social Democrata do Timor-Leste, Social Democrat Party of East Timor.

PST – Partido Socialista do Timor-Leste, Socialist Party of Timor.

PTT - Partido Trabalhista Timorense, The Timorese Labour Party.

Rai – Kingdom (T).

Ratih – Rakyat Terlatih, Trained Populace (BI)

RDTL - República Democrática do Timor-Leste, the Democratic republic of East Timor.

REDE Feto Timor Loro Sa’e - East Timorese Women’s Network, umbrella organization of women’s NGO’s (T).

Reinos – The Portuguese word for Timorese kingdoms.


RPKAD – Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat, the Army Para-Commando Regiment Command (BI)

SAPT – Sociedade Agrícola Pátria e Trabalho, the Agricultural Society Fatherland and Work.

Sarekat Islam – The first Indonesian political organisation based on the principle of anti-colonialism (BI).
SATGAS P3TT - Satuan Tugas Pengamanan Penentuan Pendapat Mengenai Timor Timur, The Task Force for the Implementation of the Popular Consultation in East Timor (BI).
Sawah – Wet rice cultivation (BI).
Sekwilda – Sekretaris Wilayah Daerah, Regional Area Secretary (BI).
SGI - Satuan Gabungan Intelligien; Kopassus intelligence unit (BI).
Solidamor – Solidaritas Untuk Penyelesaian Damai Timor Leste, Solidarity for Peace in East Timor (BI).
SPRIM – Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia Uuntuk Maubere, Indonesians in Solidarity with the Maubere people (BI).
SRSG – Special Representative of the Secretary-General.
Sucu – Eastern Timorese political unit (T).
Taninken – Tai nan’yo hōsaku kenkyu iinkai, Policy Study Committee for the South Seas Area (J).
TBO – Tenaga Bantuan Operasi, operations assistant (BI).
TAPOL - Tahanan Politik, political prisoner (BI).
TNI – Tentara Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Military (BI).
Topasses – Used by the Dutch as a term for the mixed population of Larantuka and Lifau.
Trabalhista – Partido Trabalhista, the Labour Party.
Transmigrasi – Transmigration. Indonesian resettlement programme with the aim of moving people from heavily populated areas to the less densely populated outer islands, for instance Timor (BI).
UDC – União Democrática-Cristã do Timor-Leste, the Christian Democratic Union of Timor.
UDT - União Democrática Timorense, the Timorese Democratic Union.
UNAMET - UN Assistant Mission in East Timor.
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
União Nacional – The National Union. The party of the Salazar regime in Portugal.
UNMISET - the United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor.
UNTAET - United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.
Wawasan Nusantara - The Archipelago Concept (BI).
Wanra - Perlawanan Rakyat, People's resistance (BI).
Yayasan HAK - Hukum, hak Asasi dan Keadilan, Law, Human Rights and Justice (BI).
**Introduction**

So, I had some vague idea that this isolated (or so I thought) place was connected to the rest of the world, even though the obvious evidence was not overwhelming. I had arrived on a weekly flight from Darwin, the beer was from Mozambique, and it was possible, though difficult, to travel from the Portuguese to the Indonesian part of Timor. I knew that the Portuguese colonies in Africa at the time were revolting against their European masters; but I saw nothing of this in Timor. The evidence was rather contrary; in Baucau I met a Portuguese soldier on leave who planned to walk alone and unarmed to the easternmost part of the island. Could it be that only beer and other commodities, but not ideas, flowed eastward along the links with the outside world? Yet, the young musicians in Dili were familiar with the names of musicians whose styles I rather imperfectly had tried to emulate – and there had been uprisings; the last one brutally quelled a mere fourteen years earlier. Of this I knew nothing, just as I had been unaware of the little gathering in front of the government building, discussing the possibilities of a future independent East Timor.

As mentioned earlier, the lack of news about, or emanating from, this place after 1975 seemed very odd, to say the least. The African uprisings had been well known, the war in Vietnam was the first on prime time television. During the days of the Cold War one superpower or other automatically blamed the other(s) for any trouble, anywhere in the world, including far off colonies or former colonies. Why not Timor? Geography itself could not account for this silence. If the support groups knew what was happening; surely various news media and any number of foreign departments had access to the same (and perhaps more) information?

Gradually a picture evolved of an East Timor that was somehow deliberately cut off from the world; that the silence resulted not as much from remoteness, but rather from the island’s unfortunate links with processes in the greater world system. “Connection there was, but its precise nature was both complex and elusive”\(^2\). This second quote from J. H. Parry perfectly illustrates my position in the mid 1980’s; right between a young man’s fascination with a geographical oddity with some lingering memories attached to it, and the increasingly shocked cum disgusted cum cynical person who attempted to find his way through the ‘layers of silence’\(^3\) that hid the truth of whatever was going on, locally in Timor, regionally and globally.

There was a bleak world of *realpolitik* and hypocrisy to be found among these processes; but I also found a world where a small number of individuals worked within – and often against - the greater systems; refusing to accept the silence, refusing to accept defeat. Some of them bore weapons, others supported the armed ones with food and medicine; some were journalists, lawyers, *malaes*, former commandoes and gay activists, atheists, Catholics; and quite a few were Indonesian. And yes, don’t forget the East Timorese women! They suffered, they fought, they provided for their families and were part in the planning for the future. They deserve to take equal part in a future where East Timor is no longer ‘a forgotten outpost’\(^4\), but

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2 Parry, op. cit., p. 1.
4 The general view of the outside world in regard to Portuguese Timor during the twentieth century (pre-1975) may be summarized by listing a few titles of articles on the subject, including ‘A Forgotten Outpost’. There is
a country that has left the vestiges of colonialism, oppression, internal conflicts and inequalities behind – and has openly and proudly taken its place among the independent countries of the world.

The most profound insight I gained while following East Timor’s road to independence was this, as formulated by Rabindranath Tagore:

*There is only one history – the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one.*

This book then, is not concerned with outlining a history of East Timor *per se*, but rather tries to position the island’s history within a pattern of processes, crisscrossing each other through time and space; some – such as Indonesia’s position as an anti-communist bulwark during the Cold War - having direct impact on East Timor, other – such as Portugal’s search for Prester John as an ally against Islam during the 15th century – having less direct but still crucial bearing on the story contained herein.

This work builds to a large extent upon – and can in some ways be seen as an extreme makeover of - my own *The Crocodile’s Tears* (1997), but that effort of mine is long since outdated – ending with an argument for the right of the East Timorese people to carry out an act of self-determination – it is also ruefully incomplete and even incorrect in various ways. Since then, literature on East Timor has multiplied, giving me the opportunity to fill gaps in my earlier story, amend some mistakes and add some new perspectives; a significant one being the above-mentioned role of women. The blame for whatever gaps, mistakes, and twisted perspectives that remain falls squarely on me.

I am acutely aware of the fact that my own *malae* (stranger) perspective may be interpreted as an example of Western arrogance, and that my motives for involving myself in the history may well be questioned. I will only explain my position on two important points – a) no one in the academic world or among the support groups ever got rich involving him- or herself in the ‘East Timor question’, and b) my own affiliations with East Timor are with individuals, not with political parties. I have *never* sided specifically with Fretilin, UDT, or any other political organisation along the way, though I may have had certain likings or misgivings sometimes. I simply see myself as an absent friend to the Timorese people and their continuing struggle. I hope that any Timorese person who might take offence at me poking my big nose into affairs which rightly should be a local prerogative; pay me no more mind than the Andromeda galaxy would a stargazer.

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5 And let’s not forget the Internet. The last time I googled the word “Timor” I had 42.100.000 hits. The result when specified to “East Timor” was 33.500.000. I have read them all.
PART 1. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

1. Geography and climate

In the past, early one morning in Macassar, a baby crocodile went out from his nest to look about ... There were a group of houses not far from the swamp, which was the crocodile’s home. He followed the road going in the direction of the shade of a big old tree, to spy on any of the people’s dogs, pigs, or kid goats ... He found nothing, so he turned back. The sun was high, but the tree’s shade had not allowed him to see the sun, nor feel the sun’s heat. He went from the shade, it was midday; the hot weather was bad, to arrive at the water’s edge he still had a way to go, and there was only sand ... the hot sand was like fire. ... the baby crocodile roared as he writhed back and forth, thinking that he would surely die ...

But, a child on his way to play and bathe heard the little crocodile roar. The child stepped forward quickly to look ... When he arrived, he saw that the baby crocodile was close to death ... He went up to it and, as it was not heavy, he carried it to the water. When the crocodile was in the water, his strength returned, and he was very happy; but he did not know how to repay his splendid friend ... The child was not afraid to sit on the crocodile’s back, so he rode on its back until sundown before going home. Whenever the child wanted to play in the sea, he merely called his friend ... But one day, the crocodile was carrying his friend towards the middle of the sea, when an evil thought appeared in his mind. He wanted to eat his friend, but his conscience would not submit.

He decided to ask advice from all the fish in the sea ... ‘When a person is kind to you, must the repayment be good or bad?’ They all replied that the only repayment must be kindness ... He went to ask once more. This time he would ask all the creatures of the dry land, but they too replied exactly in the same way as the fishes.

The crocodile became ashamed ... He carried his friend toward the east. When they arrived in the Timor Sea, the crocodile said to his friend, ‘Ah friend, the good deed you did for me cannot be repaid. So, I am obliged to die, and I will change into a land where you and your descendants will live off my fat, as payment for your kindness to me!’

Because of this, the wise old men tell us that Timor, with the head in Lautem and the tail in Kupang is as slender as a crocodile’s head and tail. Timor is that place of the rising sun, which some Timorese call the Crocodile ancestor.1

In the mental geography born out of a Euro-centric perspective, East Timor is situated on the fringes of obscurity. Less unknown is Indonesia, though her growing importance, economically as well as politically, has to a great extent bypassed the attention of the

international news-media public. East Timor forms a geographical part of the Indonesian archipelago. Let us therefore begin by taking a look at the geographical context in which the historical processes described in this book have taken place. The island of Timor is the easternmost of the Lesser Sunda Islands (Nusatenggara in Indonesian), an island group which in its turn is situated at the south-eastern extremity of the archipelago. The word Timor in fact denotes east in the Malay language. The former Portuguese colony of East Timor consists of the eastern part of Timor island, and includes the small islands Ataúro and Jaco plus the enclave Oecusse on the north coast of the western (formerly Dutch) part of the island. The size of East Timor is ca 15,000 sq. km, of which Oeusse takes up 815 sq.km. The maximum length of the territory (excluding Oecusse) is 265 km, its greatest width is 92 km, giving the island, in the myths of its inhabitants, the shape of a crocodile, with the head in Lautem, a town and district at the eastern end of the island, and the tail in Kupang, the capital of West Timor.

The climate differs from the rest of the Indonesian archipelago, owing to its more southerly position and proximity to Australia. This gives Timor a transitional position between the humid equatorial climate of Indonesia and the dry climate of central Australia. The interrelationship of geography, climate and vegetation is strong. It is difficult to separate them without losing some of the scope of the interrelationship. Soares divides the territory into three geographical zones which take into account not only altitude but precipitation and climate:

• The North zone consists of the north coast and all territories from the coast line up to an interior height of 600 meters. This zone coincides also with temperatures which are generally more than 75° Fahrenheit (24° Centigrade) and precipitation of less than 60 inches per year (1500 mm). The rain-fall period is from November to March. There is a dry season of more than five months. This zone characterises the Baucau plateau.

• The Mountainous zone contains all territories above 2000 feet. In the mountainous zone are found peaks as high as 11,000 feet (Mount Ramelau). The temperatures in this area are typically less than 75° Fahrenheit (24° Centigrade). Yearly rainfall exceeds 60 inches. The dry season in this area is four months, or less, per year.

• The Southern zone – the region from the southern coast rising to an altitude of 600 meters. This area is typified by temperatures above 75° Fahrenheit (24° Centigrade), more rain (from November to July), and a shorter dry season than the northern coastal zone. The plains of Waihale, to the west of Viqueque, exhibit Southern Zone climate.2

Due to the many geographical types within only a ninety kilometres width, the climatic conditions on the island can vary greatly in any two separate locations at one time. The location vis-à-vis the spinal cord will increase or lessen the effect of the two monsoons which dominate the Timorese climate. From late November until April the north-west monsoons from Asia bring heavy rains. In May the south-east monsoons from Australia have the effect of prolonging the rainy season on Timor for the southern and especially the mountainous regions. The rainy season in all areas is contrasted by a drought season in all areas (again of varying duration) which can be quite severe. To make matters worse, the rainy season is radically shortened every several years, leading to serious setbacks in the ecologically sensitive slash-and-burn agriculture.

The vegetation of East Timor is savannah-like in the lowlands, and grassy-alpine in the mountains. Only some restricted parts of the southern slopes are covered by rain forest. Instead of being luxuriant like the vegetation in Inner Indonesia, the vegetation of most parts

of Timor resembles that of northern Australia. East Timor has a number of rivers and streams, but as in northern and central Australia, few of them are permanent. In the wet season the streams overflow (and complicate communications severely), while in the dry season most of the streams dry up, and these have historically been used as pathways by the population. The Timor soils are mainly a mixture of clay and limestone, unsuitable for agriculture beyond the slash-and-burn variety. Taken together with the uncertain rain conditions, this means that there have historically been very few areas with any larger population centres, the normal condition being a scattered form of cultivation and settlement. The main exception to this is Wehale on the south coast, in an area which has benefited from two rainy seasons, due to the rains being trapped there by the high mountains of the interior.\footnote{James J. Fox ‘The Historical Consequences of Changing Patterns of Livelihood in Timor’. In Deborah Wade-Marshall and Peter Loveday (eds) Contemporary Issues in Development. Darwin: Australian National University, North Australian Research Unit, 1988, p. 262.}
2. Pre-colonial history

The first inhabitants

In Portuguese Timor, the anthropologists Antonio de Almeida, Mendes Correa, and Ruy Cinatti found flaked stone tools at a number of sites on the north and south coasts in 1953. They believed these finds stemmed from the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic. In 1963 Almeida excavated a cave at the eastern tip of the island, and found a stone assemblage there which he saw as related to Proto-Toalean finds in Celebes. Also in 1963, Ruy Cinatti reported rock-paintings on steep cliffs and in caves in the Tutuala region in the easternmost part of Portuguese Timor. The paintings resemble the rock-art of New Guinea and the New England Tableland in northern New South Wales.1

In 1966 and 1967, Ian Glover spent ten months locating and excavating archaeological deposits in East Timor. One of Glover’s aims was to try to establish the timing of the first movements of the Aborigines into Australia, as Timor is a possible migration route for Pleistocene man into Australia and Melanesia. Since no deposits older than 13,500 years were excavated, this aim was not realized. Likewise, Glover found no evidence of a relationship between the stone industries of Timor and Australia.2 Glover did however find enough artefacts to enable him to arrive at an outline of Timor’s pre-history. It reads as follows:

Before 13,500 years ago Timor was occupied by a small population of hunter gatherers, exploiting at least the inland parts of the island. The occupation of the coastal zone is of later date; ca 9,500 years ago. Perhaps 4,500-5,500 years ago an agricultural people arrived. Pigs were brought in, along with civet cats, goats, dogs, cuscus and monkeys. The introduction of cuscus, Phalanger Orientalis, Timor’s only marsupial, is an evidence for some sort of contact with either New Guinea, the Moluccas, or the Cape York Peninsula in Australia. Pottery was also made by these immigrants, and there was a marked increase in population. From ca 3,000 years ago there are traces of more regular contacts with other islands of the archipelago, with the Philippines, and with the Asian continent. Decorated pottery show unspecific similarities with finds from the areas mentioned above, and metal tools gradually replaced the traditional flint tools.3

Glover’s “before 13,500 years ago” suddenly became a gross understatement, when in 2001 excavations carried out at a cave in East Timor by Susan O’Connor and Matthew Spiggs of National University of Australia, revealed fragments of shell that upon analysis and radiocarbon dating indicated that the cave was occupied some 30,000 to 35,000 years ago. The archaeologists believe that “we are hot on the trail of the earliest human inhabitants of

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2 van Heekeren, op. cit. p. 124, believes that there must have existed a prehistoric line of communication between Australia and South Celebes, which followed short waterways where crossing by simple vessels was possible. Timor is, of course, a likely candidate to be included in such a link. Timorese oral history, as recorded by Patricia Thatcher, indicates that contacts between Timor and northern Australia has been more frequent than what has been previously believed, reaffirming the theories of Glover and van Heekeren.
PART 1. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

East Timor, who may well have been the ancestors of the earliest Australians ... Timor ... may have been used as a stepping stone for aboriginal people arriving from Asia".4

Sawah/ladang

About 300 BC bronze and iron-tool users of the Malayan race (the ‘Deutero-Malays’) arrived at the Indonesian archipelago from the Asian continent. The distinguishing feature of their culture, commonly referred to as the Dong-s’on culture, was a bronze drum. Drums from this period have been found throughout Southeast Asia. van Naerssen suggests that these bronze-users introduced sawah, wet-rice agriculture on irrigated fields, in especially favourable areas, i.e. Java and Bali. He believes that the complicated sawah-system was beyond the social and economic structure of the simple food producing cultures of their Neolithic fore-bearers.5

One theory is that the bearers of the Dong-s’on culture, already familiar with dry-rice, developed wet-rice cultivation in the Brantas valley area (in Java) as a response to the periodic flooding of the Brantas River. Whether of indigenous origin, or imported from mainland Asia, the introduction of wet-rice cultivation resulted in a ‘total evolutionary change in society, representing a move from one level of socio-cultural development to another’.6

The swidden, or slash-and-burn agricultural system operates with a narrow balance between production and labour; it ‘tends to support just about as many workers as it needs and needs just about as many as it supports’,7 thereby not giving enough surplus to support a permanent non-working elite. This changed with the arrival of irrigated fields. Irrigation increased the fertility of each field, so that surpluses were sufficient to support a leisure class. At the same time, irrigation systems and associated forms social organisation became so complex as to require a specialised non-working class of co-ordinators.

The waves of people who moved into the various parts of the archipelago did not encounter the same obstacles and possibilities to test their ingenuity and skills. As might be expected, the varying conditions of climate, soil, water supply, and altitude resulted in a variety of strategies to combat (or co-operate with) nature, in order to ensure the production/reproduction of these populations. The two main strategies were ladang and sawah. It is upon these two variations of tropical agriculture which Clifford Geertz bases his discussion of an Inner and an Outer Indonesia, where Inner Indonesia is made up by north-west, central, and east Java, south Bali, and west Lombok, while Outer Indonesia is the rest of the archipelago, plus south-west Java.8 This is an ideal model, and as such is not without deviations. There are areas of wet-rice agriculture in Sumatra, Sulawesi and Madura. In the Macassai area of East Timor, the north coast east of the capital Dili, rice has long been grown in terraces, but it is not the main crop there, it complements the corn and root crops which are the primary foodstuffs. The South Belu Plains in West Timor is also a traditional rice-growing area, but of relatively recent origin.

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To be able to control the supply and flow of water is the key to success in wet-rice agriculture, and the techniques for doing so have been accumulated through the centuries. By refining these techniques, output can be increased almost infinitely. This system at the same time manages to feed a growing number of people. The ability of the system to absorb increased numbers of cultivators on a given unit of cultivated land is seen by Geertz as the most critical sociological feature of wet-rice agriculture.9

Ladang cultivation, the foremost agricultural method in Outer Indonesia since times immemorial, differs from sawah in every aspect. While sawah is an example of the imposition of a radically new eco-system upon the nature-given conditions, ladang is to a high degree an adaption to natural surroundings. Most tropical soils lack in minerals, due to leaching caused by precipitation. The rich plant life found in tropical forests is the result of a very rapid and closed cycling of material and energy. Only momentarily are the uppermost layers of soil involved in this process, the lower layers being more or less useless. Swidden agriculture is a speeded up and directed imitation of this natural process. The nutrients released by the burning are used as quickly as possible to grow food-producing plants. If there is a delay between slashing/burning and sowing, the soils will rapidly lose their fertility as the mineral-rich ash will disappear with rainfalls.

The sowing of the burned areas is quite simple; holes are made in the soil with pointed sticks, two or three grains are put in these holes and they are then covered with the foot or the hands. Unlike the sawah system, swidden plots show a dramatic decline in fertility; a lot of energy goes up in smoke during the burning, and during rainfalls energy is leached away. The cultivated crops are also less woody than the plants of the forest, so the burning can thus not be repeated indefinitely. The umbrella-like cover of the tropical forest is imitated in ladang by the planting of shrub and tree crops in an intermingling system, and by leaving some trees standing, the idea being to minimise exposure to sun and rain.10

It takes no agricultural expertise to grasp that ladang is a highly vulnerable system. If the balance of the system is disrupted, ecological deterioration is close at hand. The result is that the former forest turns into a savannah. This danger increases in higher-altitude areas with a marked dry season; the Lesser Sunda Islands is a prime example of this. It goes without saying that ladang cultivation, as opposed to sawah, excludes large population conglomerates, or even a close proximity between groups of cultivators.

From the second century BC onwards culture in the sawah areas of the Indonesian archipelago reveals Indian influences. van Naerssen offers a plausible explanation as to why the Hindu culture was so readily accepted in parts of the archipelago. When the socio/economic structure demanded co-operation between several villages, there appeared a need for a higher authority. van Naerssen speculates that the introduction of wet-rice cultivation was the reason behind this change, as this cultivation demands an irrigation system too complex to be administered by one small village alone. The solution was to install a raka, a ruler of several villages. The village of the raka was called kraton, “the residence of the ruler”.11 There was mutual dependency in this system; the kraton of the raka depended on the production in the villages, and the villages depended on the administrative ability of the raka.

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9 Ibid. p. 32.
10 Ibid, p. 16-25.
11 van Naerssen, op. cit. p.17.
In the view of the Javanese rulers, leadership of men and magic power were closely related. When they learned of the more powerful Indian rulers, they assumed that these had access to sacred knowledge which they themselves were lacking. The key to this knowledge was the religion of the Indian rulers. In the Indonesian archipelago, the imagery of the royal cosmic order was thus generally drawn from India. Identification with what had elsewhere shown itself to be a powerful system was in itself a source of power. Moreover, the Indian religion accommodated a number of existing Indonesian assumptions about the nature of society and power, and made the transition less difficult.

The central image was that of divine power, conveyed through the king (in time the title changed from raka to Maharaja), radiating with diminishing force out from the capital, the kraton, and down the social hierarchy. The ruler’s task was to preserve his alignment with the cosmic order and to cast his civilising light upon his people, whose task it was to be instructed and obey. The areas influenced by Hindu culture did not include ladang societies of the outer parts of the archipelago, such as Timor.

The Indian influences also brought Buddhism to the archipelago. At first it was the younger version of Buddhism, Mahayana, that gained entry, because it, like Hinduism, conformed to the religious needs of the upper strata of kraton society. The older form of Buddhism, Hinayana, arrived later, and became more influential among the general population, which up until then had kept their old religion(s). As a result, Hinayana became more mixed with local traditions than was the case with Mahayana. Some of the early kingdoms during this period of Indianisation became Hinduised, while others became Buddhist. As time passed the distinction between these was slowly eroded.

This was very much the case in Java. The Javanese amalgamation of Hinduism and Buddhism is referred to as Siva-Buddhism. Hinduism, when it arrived, adapted itself to the pre-Hindu conditions in Indonesia. Buddhism did the same vis-à-vis the mixture of Hindu/pre-Hindu culture it encountered. The end result was that Brahman and Buddhist monks reinforced each other, forming one elite group at courts revolving around deified kings who passed themselves off as Hindu gods, reincarnations of the Buddha, or even as both simultaneously.12

The bigger kratons had one thing in common; their power was increasingly based on the control of the maritime trade. One such kraton, and the first with a large territorial extension, was the Buddhist kraton Srivijaya, situated in the area of present day Palembang on Sumatra, which became the leading power in the year 672.

The Chinese connection

There is a very old tradition of trade relations between China and the western parts of Asia, Ta-chin in Chinese, overland through Turkestan, on the famed Silk Road. It is possible that the trade between China and Ta-chin dates back as far as the middle of the sixth century BC. In comparison to the high esteem in which the Ta-chin trade was held by the Chinese, Southeast Asia was regarded by them as a barbarous and poor region. Sassanid Persia had a strong position in this overland trade. Besides controlling the route through Persia from Turkestan, it also controlled the route leading from this main overland route down to the Indus valley. Chinese records from the period 556 to 581 tell of textiles, minerals, coral, pearls, amber, glassware, and pepper as Persian products. Some of these products had been imported into Persia from India, or from the Makran coast in what is now Pakistan.13

13 Ibid.
However, by the sixth century A.D. no Chinese had yet reached the Far West (Ta-chin) by sea. At that time merchants were frequently bringing goods from Ta-chin into Indo-China by sea. It is not specified in Chinese sources who these traders were, but they mention six tributary kingdoms on the sea. Five of these are considered to have been Indonesian. When the Chinese began to visit Southeast Asia more regularly, their goal was not the Straits or the archipelago but, rather, the Indianised Funan in what is now Kampuchea, the oldest known Southeast Asian political entity.

From the port of Tun Sun, controlled by Funan, an overland trade route stretched across the Isthmus of Kra, linking the trade on the Bay of Bengal with that of the China Sea. In the third century A.D., the importance of Funan as a connection for southern Chinese contacts with western parts of Asia grew, complementing the older Silk Road. One can presume that it was through Funan that the Chinese gained knowledge of regions further south, including Timor. This knowledge, and perhaps also Chinese trade with Timor, may thus be considerably older than the first Chinese direct contacts with Sumatra and Java.

During the fifth century Persia was gaining an important role in the Indian Ocean maritime trade, but the overland route was still the fastest route to China. Increased maritime trade between China and Ta-chin in the fifth and sixth centuries resulted from an invasion of barbarians of the north into China in the early fourth century. A great many of the people who yearned for the Persian goods fled to the south of China as a result of the invasion from the north. Sixty to seventy per cent of the upper classes moved to south of the Yangtse river in the period between 311 and ca 325. They were cut off from the supply of Persian goods when the northern rulers captured Kansu in north-western China in the year 439. This is the background to the slowly evolving maritime trade between China and the West, through the Straits of Malacca.\(^\text{14}\)

### The rise and fall of Srivijaya

By the fifth century Funan’s role as the principal commercial power in the Southeast Asian world was being seriously eroded. Direct voyages were then being made from the Sunda Strait region to China across the South China Sea, bypassing Funan. Thus, around the Strait of Malacca evolved a zone of Southeast Asian commerce, centred on the south-eastern coast of Sumatra. When the Chinese/Persian overland trade was gradually replaced by maritime trade through the Straits, the region around present day Palembang in Sumatra was ready to assume an important role in this trade.\(^\text{15}\)

Chau-Ju-Kua, the thirteenth century Chinese author of *Chu-fan-chï* (translated into English as *A Description of Barbarous Peoples, or Records of Foreign Nations*), presents a straightforward explanation to the success-story of San-fo-tsi (the Chinese name for Srivijaya):

> This country, (is) lying in the ocean and controlling the straits through which the foreigners’ sea and land traffic in either direction must pass. If a merchant ship passes by without entering, their boats go forth to make a combined attack, and all are ready to die. This is the reason why this country is a great shipping centre.\(^\text{16}\)


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In 1025 the south Indian Chola kingdom organised a punitive naval raid on Srivijaya, after which Srivijaya never regained its old prosperity and control. By 1079-1082 its capital had moved from Palembang to the central Sumatran port of Jambi. Java had by then become a dominant trade area, and the ports of northern Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula were beginning to function independently as alternative ‘centres’. With the fall of Srivijaya, the old link between international trade and the Java Sea trade network was replaced by Java. The great power after the fall of Srivijaya was the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit.

The rise and fall of Majapahit

The stage was now set for the founding of the great Majapahit, and this was accomplished by Vijaya in 1293. The most important source for our present knowledge of Majapahit is the contemporary chronicle Nagarakrtagama, written by Prapanca in the year 1365. The expansion of Majapahit seemed to be an impossible dream until the days of Gajah Mada, who as patih, the Javanese equivalent of prime minister, under king Ayam Wuruk, proceeded to bring as much of the archipelago as possible under Majapahit’s rule. He was quite successful in this endeavour, though to what extent is disputed by scholars. This dispute also concerns Timor’s position vis-à-vis Majapahit, as Timor is mentioned in the Nagarakrtagama as ‘also mindful’, possibly denoting a position of dependency.

Gajah Mada died in 1364, and Ayam Wuruk died in 1389. Before his death Hayam Wuruk divided the kingdom into two parts, ruled by his son and his daughter. This led to a war between the two parts, lasting between 1403-1406. Majapahit was again united in 1429, but the period from 1450 to 1478 witnessed another period of succession wars that brought an end to the old dynasty. A new dynasty was founded, but internal unrest continued throughout the fifteenth century.

An external disintegrating factor was the growth of Malacca into an important harbour and great political power that controlled the passage of the Strait of Malacca. The Majapahit-controlled harbour cities became less and less frequented by foreign traders from China, India, Persia and Arab countries, who preferred Malacca. Majapahit was conquered by troops from Demak, the first Muslim kraton in the archipelago, in 1478. Majapahit rebelled in 1486, and when the Portuguese arrived in Malacca around the turn of century, Majapahit tried to make contact with them. Demak, a sworn enemy of the Portuguese intruders, sent troops to Majapahit, and both the capital and the royal palace were destroyed. Thus, the kingdom of Majapahit disappeared in the year 1527. The mighty Majapahit’s defeat by Demak meant that Islam made a strong inroad in the archipelago. From then on, all important non-European centres of power in the archipelago have been Muslim powers.

17 Hall, op. cit, p.102.
A Muslim trade network in the Indian Ocean

Majapahit’s conquest by a Muslim kraton can be seen as a perpetuation of a development which had been in place since the eighth century. After Mohammed’s escape from Mecca to Medina, the *hijra* in Arabic, Islam spread rapidly. At the time of Mohammed’s death in 632, Medina was the centre for the new religion. In 638 Syria and Palestine had been taken from Byzantium by Muslim armies. In 637 the Persian capital fell, and the conquering of the Sassanid empire was completed in the years 640-650. For the first century after the rise of Islam, contact with the East was of a military nature, but under the Abbasid Caliphate, centred in Baghdad, trade began to flourish. Up to the beginning of the tenth century or even later, Arab ships and merchants sailed all the way to China and back. Gradually, however, this pattern of trade was discontinued in favour of shorter, segmented voyages between a number of leading port-cities. In 945, Amir Mu’izz al-Dawla of the Persian Buwaiyid dynasty entered Baghdad and ended the Abbasid Caliphate. This led to a decline in Baghdad’s trade, but Muslim trade with China continued, with the Red Sea port of Aden as the most important harbour.

Muslims were now often basing themselves in Canton and sailing to and from Borneo and Sumatra. Many of them were used by local princes as envoys to the Chinese emperor. This local trade was the cause of a slow but steady penetration of Islam into Southeast Asia, reaching as far as Java by the end of the eleventh century. In India, the armies of Islam conquered Delhi in 1192, and the Sultanate of Delhi conquered Gujarat, on India’s north-west coast, in 1303-4.

During the seventh century Arab merchants had moved south along the East African coast, trading and founding settlements. As time passed, they mixed with the local populations, introducing Arabic culture and at the same time absorbing the cultures of the local populations. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries many of the Arabic/African settlements grew to become cities as a result of the growing demand for African goods. The culture evolving around this trade was a mixture of African and Arabic elements, and had its own language, Swahili. When Africa was incorporated into the already existing network of trade from Arabia via India/Ceylon to China, it resulted in Muslim control of trade in the whole Indian Ocean.

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PART 1. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

During the period up until 1500 no basic changes took place in the coastal and monsoon maritime routes which mariners followed in the Indian Ocean or in the skills of the ship-captains who sailed through these waters. The most important merchants were those from Gujarat. They sent ships and merchandise to all ports in this area, and they established colonies at important centres of trade. By 1500 about one thousand Gujarati merchants and four or five thousand seamen made up the most important foreign trading community in Malacca. Malacca’s rulers had converted to Islam in the fourteenth century. By the last half of the fifteenth century Malacca had grown to be the essential terminus of Indian Ocean trade, with a population of some 40,000 to 50,000.24 There was hardly any armed shipping in the Indian Ocean. Even the wealthy entrepôts of Hormuz and Malacca possessed no ocean-going warships. The Muslim-controlled shipping which dominated the trade of the Indian Ocean used large ships for long-distance journeys, but even the largest ones were not provided with artillery.25 The exception was the Chinese junks. They were as large and powerful as the sixteenth-century European ships and were capable of transporting large numbers of armed men. In 1368 the founders of the Ming dynasty overthrew the Mongolian Yuan dynasty. The overland caravan route collapsed, and the maritime route through Southeast Asia boomed.

This was a time when China was undertaking a policy of expansion in a southerly direction, coupled with the establishment of commercial relations. Under the command of Chêng Ho Chinese fleets, with as many as sixty ships and 27,000 men, made seven expeditions between 1403-1433 into the Indian Ocean, and, in some cases, went as far as Africa and Arabia. In 1433, the year of the last expedition, China was without a doubt the most important sea-power of the Orient. However, soon after this expedition the Chinese suddenly withdrew from the maritime trade. The shipyards were closed down, the commanders were sacked and the ships were destroyed. The reasons behind this are largely unknown; Basil Davidson believes that it was the outcome of a conflict between different interests at the Chinese court. The administrators felt threatened by the new, and growing, class of traders which had evolved as a direct result of the maritime trade. The sea trade was also seen by these administrators as leading to too close contact with the barbarians of the West.26

Whatever the reason, the Chinese fleets disappeared, and the stage was set for the era of European colonialism in the Indian Ocean area and in Southeast Asia. When the Portuguese arrived they did not have to deal with this possible, and formidable, foe.

Timor - migrations and outside contacts

It appears as though the oldest population on the island of Timor is the Atoni, a people with decidedly Melanesian ethnic characteristics. During the fourteenth century the Tetun people arrived to the island and settled on the south coast, pushing the Atoni to the south-west, into what is today West Timor.

26 Davidson, op. cit., p. 168.
Contrary to the Atoni, the Tetun display considerable ethnic similarities with the inhabitants of the western parts of the archipelago. This means that Timor is what anthropologists call a transition area, where an Indonesian/Malay population and a Melanesian population met and influenced one another. There is a story in which the Tetun trace their descent to *Sina Mutin Malaka* (China white Malaya), thought to be present day Malaya. According to this myth they sailed via Celebes and Flores and landed in South Belu, an area on the south coast of Timor, on the West Timor side of the border.\(^{27}\)

From the south coast of Timor the Tetun then expanded until four of their ‘tribes’ had founded kingdoms (*rai* or *reino*). Wehale came to dominate the other three, and became the strongest power in East Timor. The Atoni became the dominant power in West Timor, and claimed (mostly symbolic) sovereignty over that area, under their ruler Sonba’i. When the Portuguese arrived, they noticed the differences between the two parts of the island, and the petty kingdom’s allegiances to, respectively, Wehale and Atoni, and called the respective areas Belo and Servião. However, as Hägerdal points out:

Colonial use of the geopolitical terminology was inconsistent and did not completely correspond to actual ethnic conditions.….. the geographical terms serviao and belu were both based on hierarchies that clearly existed long before the beginning of Western political domination. Their direct political influence was limited; the traditional rulers were the highest in rank among the Atoni … and the Tetun speakers; respectively, but only in terms of ritual precedence. Nothing suggests that these principalities had any political status comparable to Western states before the arrival of the Europeans. … Serviao and Belu became tools to handle the complicated realities of more than 60 minor principalities, whose ritualized connections largely escaped the observer from the outside.\(^{28}\)

There is an excellent summary of early Portuguese writings on Timor in Schulte-Nordholt’s *The Political System of the Atoni of Timor*.\(^{29}\) Apart from the Portuguese sources, the only written material on Timorese early history\(^{30}\) is found in Chinese sources. Taken together, these sources provide a picture of Timor before the European arrival in which the political situation was atomistic and centrifugal. There were, as noted above, no large political kingdoms in the mould of the European models.

Effective administration was contained to localised territorial groups. There is no archaeological or historical evidence of any sort of population centre, let alone established centres for coastal trade. Trade was carried out by means of exchange between a hierarchy of clan groupings and trading partners. In this hierarchy, authority and power was magnified in proportion to the degree of proximity to the external trading partner. Alliances seem to have formed between members of the same ethno-linguistic groups but not between members of different ethno-linguistic groups.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{30}\) There is, however, an as yet unpublished collection of oral history. *The Pre-Colonial History of the island of Timor with some notes on the Macassan influence in the island*, compiled by P.G. Spillett. Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin.

\(^{31}\) Shepard Forman, ‘East Timor: Exchange and Political Hierarchy at the Time of the European Discoveries.’ In Karl L. Hutterer (ed.), *Economic Exchange and Social*
There were no signs of foreign domination, or even small-scale settlements, on Timor when the Portuguese arrived. Duarte Barbosa, the chronicler of Portuguese expansion into the Indian Ocean area, wrote of Timor in 1516 as an island ‘which has its own independent King and tongue’. Long before the arrival of the Portuguese, traders from Java, later to be followed by traders from Macassar and China, travelled to Timor and other islands in the vicinity, attracted by the abundance of sandalwood in Timor and the cloves of the Moluccas. The trade with Timor took place on the coast, and transactions were chiefly made with the rulers.

Up until the beginning of the twentieth century large parts of Timor were covered by sandalwood, and this has probably been the most decisive factor in the history of East Timor up until modern times. Sandalwood was cherished in the East for many hundreds of years before the arrival of Europeans due to the aroma of its oil-bearing heartwood; the white sandalwood of Timor was known as the one with the highest quality. This rather small tree grew all over Timor up to an altitude of 1300 m. In India sandalwood was used in the funeral-pyres of the high-caste; the caste mark of the Brahmins was a paste of sandalwood, and in the temples statues were made of sandalwood. In China sandalwood was used for coffins, for the joss-sticks burnt in temples and on house-altars, and for intricate carving and pearl-inlay work. Due to the lack of written sources, it is impossible to tell how old Javanese trade with Timor is. The above-mentioned Ian Glover believes this trade to be very old, and van Leur is of the same opinion. He believes that the India/Indonesia trade dating back to the beginning of the Christian era may have also included Timor and the other Sunda Islands.

We have already seen that Timor, from a Chinese point of view, belonged to the Lo-Ch’a region in the year 610. It is not known whether the Chinese had, prior to that time, any firsthand experience of the islands of this region. From the thirteenth century there is a Chinese text written by the aforementioned Chau Ju-Kua, which mentions Ti-wu (=Timor) as one of three sources of sandalwood (the other two are Ta-Kang, an unidentified island, and San-fo-tsi =Srivijaya, which indicates trade between Timor and Srivijaya at that time). This early text clearly shows the Chinese interest in sandalwood. In the words of Chau Ju-Kua ‘its aroma is pure and strong and apt to evaporate; in burning it surpasses all other incenses’.

From 1349 is an account by the Chinese trader Wang Dayan, Summary Record of the Island Nations, where he writes of Timor that the mountains have no trees other than sandalwood in great abundance. He also writes of chiefs in twelve places, that the price of wine and meat is cheap, and that the women have no sense of shame. The latter observation, as pointed out by Lance Eccles, “may in fact be sexual curiosity masked as moral righteousness”.

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33 Ormeling, op. cit. p.104.
34 Ibid, pp. 92-93.
35 Ibid, p. 94
36 Patricia Thatcher found references to Timor dating from the seventh century in the museum of Guangzhou (Canton) during a visit there in 1990. To my knowledge these references have never been translated,or published in the West. See Patricia L. Thatcher, The Timor-Born in Exile in Australia. Melbourne: M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Monash University, 1992, p. 64.
37 Hirth and Rockhill, op. cit., p. 208.
PART 1. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

Groeneveldt writes of a Chinese source from 1436, *Hsing-ch’a Shêng-lan* (the title is translated into English as *General Account of Peregrinations at Sea*), in which Timor is described as covered with sandalwood, and that the country produces nothing else. Goods imported included gold, silver, iron and earthenware. Possibly based on Wang Dayan’s report, the *Hsing-ch’a Shêng-lan* also mentions twelve ports, each under a chief, and that when ships arrive, women get on board to trade, ‘and many men get infected with disease.’

With this disease, ‘caused by the unhealthiness of the country,’ eight or nine out of ten of those infected die. The *Tung Hsi Yang K’au* (Research on the Eastern and Western Ocean), published in 1618, but with descriptions referring to the time of the first European contacts with the area in ca. 1500, describes how when a foreign ship arrived, the king came down, accompanied by his wife and children, concubines and servants, ‘his suite being rather numerous.’ Taxes had to be paid daily by the merchants, but they were not very heavy. Trade was not allowed when the king was not present.39

The inhabitants of Timor, though quite used to Asian traders, did not allow foreigners to establish settlements on their land. The visitors were only allowed to set anchor at certain trade centres, deliver their goods and load the sandalwood at prices fixed by the Timorese chiefs. After this they had to leave the island and were not allowed to return until one year later. The inhabitants spoke contemptuously of all visitors to the island. The word ‘Malay’, which was derived from the most widely used pre-colonial trade language, became associated with low-class foreigners. From this it followed that the merchants from China became known as Chinese-Malays, and the Javanese merchants were called Javanese-Malays. Soon there were also Portuguese- and Dutch-Malays.40 Spelled *malae*, the word today has the meaning ‘foreigner’ in Tetun, the largest of the East Timorese languages.

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3 Traditional East Timorese society – linguistic and ethnological outlines

The languages of Timor

Within the comparatively small area of East Timor, there is a bewildering number of languages and/or dialects. In the following short exposition, I will try not only to give an overview of the present linguistic situation in the territory, but also present some of the difficulties that have faced various writers as they attempted to unravel the multitude of aspects that forms the linguistic situation of this small island, and in some cases tried to accommodate highly unaccommodating and floating realities on the ground to fit neatly inside the borders of clearly delineated areas on maps.

The languages of Timor can be divided into two groups, the majority belonging to the family of Austronesian (also called Malayo-Polynesian) languages, while only a few are non-Austronesian. The Austronesian family of languages is one of the world’s major language groups, and is found mainly on islands; Madagascar, Indonesia, the Philippines, Formosa, Micronesia, New Guinea, Melanesia, New Zealand, and Polynesia. Within this language group, Dyen distinguishes three major subdivisions:

1. Western Austronesian, stretching from Madagascar in the west, and from the Mergui Archipelago of Burma and Thailand in the north-west, to the Palau Islands, Guam and Botel-Tobago in the north-east;
2. Northern Austronesian, which is made up of the highland languages of Taiwan; and
3. Eastern, or Oceanic, Austronesian, in which all Melanesian and Polynesian languages are found, plus most languages of Micronesia. These languages are thought to have sprung from a common parent (Proto Austronesian) about five thousand years ago, with the more widely spoken languages diverging much more recently.

Dyen makes a further sub-classification (I will here only mention the sub-groupings relevant to this chapter), where the languages of the Philippines are grouped together with the languages of western Indonesia; this subgroup of the Western Austronesian languages is named Hesperonesian (also called West Indonesian). For the languages of eastern Indonesia Dyen suggests the name Moluccan, ‘though its membership may extend into the Lesser Sundas’. If we accept this extension into the Lesser Sundas (I will refer to further sub-classification later, which will justify this position), we can return back to the initial division of the East Timorese languages into two groups, Austronesian and non-Austronesian. The Austronesian group of East Timorese languages falls within the East Indonesian (or Moluccan in Dyen’s term) subgroup of Austronesian languages.

2 Ibid, p. 15.
4 Dyen, op. cit., p. 15
The East Indonesian languages depart in many ways from the Indonesian type (represented by Batak, Javanese, and the languages in Kalimantan and Sulawesi), to such a degree that some authors have reckoned the linguistic beginning of Melanesia from Timor.\(^5\)

According to Capell the East Timorese group of Austronesian languages consists of the languages Tetun, Mambai, Tukudede, Galole, Idate, Vaikeno and Kemak. The Indonesian element in these languages is minimal.\(^6\)

The non-Austronesian languages of East Timor were first shown by Capell to belong to the Papuan group of languages. These languages are chiefly found in the interior of the island, indicating that they had been on the island before the arrival of the Austronesian speakers. Their vocabulary reveals a complete departure from the Austronesian group, and they have very little in common regarding grammar.\(^7\) The languages in this group are Dagada, Bunak, Macassae, Uaimo’a and Kairui.\(^8\)

This neat division into a specified number of Austronesian/non-Austronesian languages is unfortunately too orderly to correspond fully with the actual situation. Firstly, the number of languages in East Timor is in itself a matter of debate. Morris’ map of Eastern Timorese languages\(^9\) is not congruent with either the one in Hicks,\(^10\) nor the one in Capell,\(^11\) both of which are based on Martinho’s *Timor: Quarto Séculos de Colonização Portuguesa* (1943). Nogo-nogo is not included at all in the maps of Hicks or Capell. Uaimo’a is in Morris’ map placed differently than in Capell’s, while Capell’s Kairui is absent in Morris’ map (as well as in Hicks’). Vaikeno is not included in Morris’ map since it is spoken in the Oecusse area (the former Portuguese enclave in West Timor). Esteves Felgas overcomes some of the above problems by naming his map *Linguas e Dialectos* and including a number of letter O’s on his map.\(^12\) O stands for *outras* (others) and include, in Portuguese spelling, ‘Idaté, Cairui, Midique, Naumique, Nauhete, etc.’ Forbes, a naturalist who visited Timor in 1882-83, found the languages in Timor to number about forty.\(^13\)

Apparently the demarcation line is between language and dialect, and modern writers have tended to follow the example of Capell’s study. David Hicks gives the number of languages as thirteen, and, from his own experience, states that the others are dialects of these languages. He gives the examples of Kairui, Midik, Uaimo’a, Hosso Moko and Metioka as ‘simply variations within the one language, that usually known as Kairui’.\(^14\)

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6 Capell, op. cit., part I, p. 194.
7 Ibid, part II, p. 313.
8 Ibid.
11 Capell, op. cit., part I:192.
13 Capell, op. cit., part II, p. 313.
Ranck, who conducted a study in East Timor in 1974/1975, has a similar view to Hicks’, noting that at least twelve languages are spoken, and that there may be over twenty-four dialects in addition. According to Dunn there are more than thirty ethno-linguistic groups in East Timor, while Almeida specifies thirty-one dialectos. To suggest the difficulties encountered by a presumptive East Timor linguist, an illuminating example is the small (144 sq. km.) island of Ataúro, twenty-three kilometres north of Dili. Barros Duarte distinguishes between three different languages, Rêssuk, Raklung’u and Râhessuk, on this small island alone. A fourth Atauran dialect, Dadu’a, is spoken on the main island by the descendants of Atauran settlers in the villages of Ilimano and Beheda, west of Manatuto. These dialects are all variants of the Wetarese language; spoken on the islands Wetar and Lirar.

Capell further complicates the matter by noting that even within any given language area not all speakers are homogenous. This is confirmed by Almeida, whose map includes pockets of dialects within dialects. Likewise, Elizabeth Traube writes of ‘four main dialects of Mambai, all mutually intelligible ... ’

I have discussed the above with Timorese persons, who often gave, rather heatedly, their view that the difference between the so called dialects of East Timor are just as big as between certain languages of Europe, and therefore deserve to be regarded as languages rather than as dialects. Thatcher uses Almeida’s map, with the Portuguese word dialectos translated as ‘all indigenous languages’. On Thatcher’s version of Almeida’s map ‘the most common indigenous languages’ are indicated, avoiding the word dialects altogether, while still keeping a division. This seems to me to be a case of Solomonic wisdom, and the best solution for the time being.

I have already mentioned that the Austronesian languages of East Timor belong to what Dyer labelled the Moluccan group of languages, by others called East Indonesian languages. This means that the Indonesian – as in West Indonesian – element in these languages is comparatively small. This leads Capell to talk of a regional sub-group ‘be it labelled one or the other’ including the languages of Timor, Roti, Wetar, Leti and Kiar, plus those of Flores and Solor, the last two islands being less intimately connected with the rest of the regional sub-group.

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19 Capell, op. cit, part II, p. 313.
22 Capell, op. cit., part I, p. 194.
This sub-grouping dovetails nicely with the findings of the physical anthropologists Bijlmers and Keers, writing in the late twenties and the late forties respectively. In 1948 Keers wrote that ‘anthropologically there is no connection whatever with the western islands. Even in Kupang (at the western end of West Timor) there are no signs of Malay influence.’ Keers goes even further, voicing the opinion that the western boundary of Melanesia should be drawn east of West-Sumba and West-Flores, and not east of Timor, as she had found on many maps. The reason for this is that the Proto-Malays reached the south-east frontier of their area of settlement in West-Sumba and West-Flores, even if Proto-Malay elements can be found in South Belu in West Timor.

Of all indigenous languages of East Timor, Tetun, in its different variations, is by far the most widely spoken. Tetun can be divided into four variations (cf. the map above): Tetun-Los, spoken in the Suai area; Tetun-Terik, spoken in the north-west of East Timor and in the north-eastern part of West Timor; Tetun-Belu spoken in the south-west of East Timor and in the south east of West Timor; and Tetun-Dili, the language which is described by some as a lingua-franca, with a simpler grammar than the other variations, and containing many Portuguese elements. Apart from Tetun, the major languages are, according to Capell, Mambai, Tukudede, Bunak, Kemak and Maccasae. Dunn adds Galoli and Dagada to this list.

Just as there are two types of languages found in Timor, one Austronesian and the other non-Austronesian, the Austronesian languages of the island can likewise be divided into two groups. The dividing line between these two groups runs roughly from the eastern boundary of the former Portuguese enclave Oeusse to the opposite south coast of West Timor. This line falls just to the west of the border between East and West Timor (Tetun-Terik, Tetun-Belu and Bunak ‘spills over’ the border into West Timor). East of this line the languages are plentiful, and they show great variation. West of the line the languages are few, with Atoni being the biggest by far, and they are markedly similar to one another.

The Portuguese used to label all languages inside the western territory Vaikenu, which suggests the similarities between the variations. This is confirmed by Capell, who writes that the whole area ‘may be said to be covered by one language with merely dialectical variations.’ The exception is the Kupang area, in the extreme west of the island, which is linguistically distinct, but still belongs to the same group. As with East Timor, Capell’s observations about West Timor deal with the linguistic situation in colonial times. The former Dutch West Timor has been a part of the Republic of Indonesia since after W.W.II, and the usage of Bahasa is today universal in the area.

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26 Traditionally, the name of the language has been spelled ‘Tetum’, i.e. the Portuguese spelling. This has spilled over into English spelling, although in more recent times ‘Tetun’ has been the choice of many writers, including speakers of the language, one reason being that there is no word in the language itself that ends with an ‘um’.
27 Dunn, op. cit., p. 3.
28 Capell, op. cit., part III:47
29 Ibid, p. 20.
At the time of writing, the most authoritative work on the subject, written after the disastrous and tumultuous Indonesian occupation, which worked havoc with many age-old aspects of Timorese society, including linguistic boundaries, is Australian linguist Geoffrey Hull’s *The Languages of Timor*. Hull specifies the number of languages in East Timor as sixteen, twelve Austronesian and four Trans-New Guinean (the Papuan languages of Capell). According to Hull the East Timorese Austronesian languages fall into two main groups, Fabronic and Ramelaic. The Fabronic languages are Tetun, Kawaimina, Habun, Wetarese, Galoli, Bekais, Dawan and Makuva, and the Ramelaic languages are Tokodede, Kemak, Mambai and Idalaka. The Timoric languages descend from Old Butonese, introduced from South-East Celebes probably about one thousand years ago.

It appears that at the time of the Butonese migrations to Timor only non-Austronesian languages were spoken on the island. Not long after the Butonese settlements, Timor was invaded by people from the Central Moluccas. As a result of contact with a kindred Moluccan language, probably Old Ambonese, the Butonic dialects underwent the drastic grammatical simplification known to linguists as *creolization*. The aboriginal, i.e. Trans-New Guinean, languages were eventually creolized as well. Of Timor’s Trans-New Guinean languages only four survive today: Bunak, Makasai, Malakero and Fatuluku. Their vocabulary reveals a complete departure from the Austronesian group, and they have very little in common regarding grammar.

Tetun, Makasai and Mambai are by far the three biggest languages. Tetun is the most widely used vernacular in East Timor, and can be divided into four variations: Tetun-Los, spoken in the South coastal area; Tetun-Terik, spoken in the north-west of East Timor and in the north-eastern part of West Timor; Tetun-Belu spoken in the south-west of East Timor and in the south east of West Timor; and Tetun-Dili/Tetun Prasa, the language which is described by some as a *lingua-franca*, with a simpler grammar than the other variations, and containing many Portuguese elements.

According to Cinatti et al, the East Timorese usually speak at least two languages (apart from Portuguese, which was/is spoken only by a minority). The simplified version of Tetun is used to formulate common or borrowed concepts, and the first language in their group of origin to designate the environment, kinship terms, religion, oral literature and so forth. Tetun-Dili was also the language of commerce, and was used by most of the otherwise Hakka speaking Chinese traders in their dealings with indigenous Timorese.

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31 Kawaimina is an acronym used by linguists rather than by speakers of the language, and refers jointly to the similar Kairui, Waimaha, Midiki and Naueti dialects, the easternmost Timorese vernaculars (Hull 2004).

32 Dawan is the mother tongue of the Atoni people who inhabit most of the western half of Timor. This language is counted among those of East Timor because one of its dialects, Baikenu (Vaiqueno), is the vernacular of the Oecusse enclave.

33 Capell, op. cit., part II, p. 313.

34 Only in the Fataluku-speaking area, where Tetun was unknown, was Portuguese used as a *lingua franca* by the local community to communicate with other Timorese. John Hayek, ‘Towards a language history of East Timor’. In *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Linguistica* 10, Firenze: Università di Firenze, 2000, p.217.

35 Morris, op. cit., p. 6.

36 Apart from Portuguese proper, there were also two distinct variants of Portuguese spoken up until the 1960’s, Bidau (a Dili suburb) Creole Portuguese and Macau Creole Portuguese. Hayek, op. cit., p. 219.

Returning to the earlier mention of the conflict re the number of languages/dialects, I refer to James Dunn, according to whom there are more than thirty ethno-linguistic groups (my italics) in East Timor.\textsuperscript{38} I believe that this statement does not run contrary to Hull’s sixteen languages, as I suppose that languages or dialects can both be a basis for such a group.

\textbf{Cosmology and structure of society}

The majority of the ethno-linguistic groups in East Timor share the belief that the cosmos and human society are organised in the same way, and evidence for this can be found in their myths as well as in their social organisation. In \textit{The Flow of Life}, edited by James Fox, is pointed out cultural elements which can be seen in East Timor and in eastern Indonesia more generally. The house reflects social and cosmic order; the use of relative age and gender is used to assert status differentiation; marriage alliances are seen as transmissions of life, and relationships with ancestors and the spirit world are linked to the continuation of fertility.\textsuperscript{39}

In this worldview, there is an interdependence and close relationship of cosmos and human society. Balance between the two is achieved by following established social values and obligations.\textsuperscript{40} In religion this is done through rituals that are aimed at exhibiting and (re)establishing unity. Tetun religion, as well as society, is based on contrasts, or what David Hicks, who carried out anthropological fieldwork among the Caraubalo Tetun in 1966, labels complementary oppositions. The most important contrasts are between human beings and ancestral ghosts, and between man and woman. The visible and tangible secular world, \textit{rai}, lies on the earth’s surface and is dominated by men; the sacred world, \textit{rai laran}, ‘the world inside’, is dominated by female ancestral ghosts.\textsuperscript{41}

The rituals of Tetun society have two themes, ‘union leading to creation’, and ‘separation leading to restoration’. When the opposite worlds meet outside of the control of these rituals, chaos appears.\textsuperscript{42} At the life-stages of birth, marriage, and death, rites of passage are performed to secure an orderly transformation of an individual’s status.\textsuperscript{43} At the first stage of the ritual the individual is severed from his former status (of being unborn, unmarried, or living). This is followed by a phase where the individual has departed from his former status, but has not yet received a new one. When the segregation phase has come to its end, the rites of integration ready the individual for his/her new status (a new member of the community, a married person, or a dead soul).

\textsuperscript{38} Dunn, op. cit., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{40} José Trindade & Bryant Castro, \textit{Rethinking Timorese identity as a Peacebuilding Strategy: The Lorosa’e Loromonu Conflict from a Traditional Perspective}. Dili: The European Union’s Rapid Reaction Mechanism Programme, 207, pp. 1-18.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, pp. 113-114.
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Sacred objects are kept in the uma lulik (sacred house), cared for by the priest, the rai lulik. All sorts of objects are kept in these sacred houses – old war and festival drums, wooden swords, insignia of old liurais (kings), old uniforms and fire-arms, spears, jewels, clothes and pots, buffalo heads and horns. As will be discussed later, Portuguese flags were sometimes also included among the lulik objects. Every living individual has a soul and is expected to retain it until his or her death. There is a continuous battle for the possession of the soul, with four active participants; the individual, the ancestral spirits, the sabolai (witch) and the mausa (curer). To maintain equilibrium among the four involved parties, thus keeping possession of one’s soul, the individual’s behaviour is regulated through a system of rules and rituals which link the tangible world to the spiritual world.

Crucial to this system is the ‘flow of women’. There is a distinction between wife-giver and wife-taker found throughout the island of Timor, and among all groups life appears at birth and leaves at death in a uni-directional flow which corresponds to the asymmetric flow of women through society. The flow of women leads to marital alliances which are part of a wider system of social action which ties together and integrates the worlds of the living and the spirits into a stable equilibrium. An individual’s relationship with the spirit world and the world of the living is constantly renewed through rituals which reaffirm man’s relationship with his ancestors. The entire system functions to maintain balance. The desire for union and balance is found throughout the entire spectrum of East Timorese social interaction, and imbalance must be corrected as quickly as possible.

Shepard Forman, specifically writing about the Makassae ethno-linguistic group, notes that bridewealth, consisting of buffalos, horses, and swords, is presented to wife-givers, whose counter-presentations consist of cooked rice and pork, ikat, woven clothes. These marital exchanges, known generally by the Portuguese name barlaque, are the linchpin of traditional Makassae social organization.

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Uma lulik

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44 Capell, op. cit., part I, p. 208.
47 Lazarowitz, op. cit., p. 150.
The flow of women leads to marital alliances which are part of a wider system of social action which ties together and integrates the worlds of the living and the spirits into a stable equilibrium. In marriage, three paired contrasts unite. Bride-groom and bride unite to create a new human being; wife-givers and wife-takers unite to create mutual ritual benefits, and human and ghosts unite to ensure these two unions are fertile and to help ghosts live comfortably in the other world.\(^49\) This balance can be disturbed at any time if an individual or community breaks traditional rules, bandu, as laid out by the ancestors. The result of this will be misfortune of one kind or another - including war - caused by ancestral retribution against individual transgressors, their families and, possibly, the entire community.\(^50\) Conflicts or differences within the community were ideally resolved by means of a process called nahe biti, with the literal meaning of stretching or laying down a mat. Within the concept of nahe biti, could be distinguished biti boot (big mat) and biti kiik (small mat). Nahe biti, the big mat, was used to settle differences on wider lineage, kin and clan levels, while biti kiik was applied when questions regarding family matters were discussed. As implied in the name, nahe biti entailed that two sides sit down on a mat, in a process supervised by elders, not only with the aim to resolve momentary differences between the two parties through consensus, but also, and more importantly, to attain the long-term goal of balance in society.\(^51\)

The largest political unit in pre-colonial Timor was the kingdom, rai in Tetun, which was a conglomeration of sucos (sometimes translated as princedoms), ruled by a liurai (king). The sucos consisted of a number of clans, residing in knuas (villages, or house-clusters, consisting of about three to twelve houses. Each clan was represented by a sacred building, the Uma Lulik “the epicentre of Timorese values”, binding individuals and households within an historical and symbolic unity.\(^52\) Pre-colonial East Timor was a markedly hierarchical society, “and on every level males were superior to women”.\(^53\)

The liurais had an absolute power in worldly matters, but ultimately depended on spiritual leaders, dato, who had the power to appoint political leaders.\(^54\) On leadership level was also the lia nian. This was the judicial authority or conflict arbitrator, who had the knowledge of ancestral rules and therefore could establish when, and how, bandu was broken.\(^55\)

Below rai level, the suku was organised in a similar way. It had a double leadership, the macair fukun/dato uain. The function of the macair fukun was external, while the dato uain upheld the internal order of the suku.\(^56\) Like the suku, the Tetun village, knua, has a double leadership, consisting of the Dato uain and the Kartuas kik. Kartuas has the approximate meaning of elder, kik denotes an implementary function. The Dato uain is the link between the village and the suku, while the Kartuas kik handles the daily affairs of the village.\(^57\)

An Eastern Timorese village was thus quite hierarchically organised on a formal level. In a more informal manner, the notion of tauk (with the meaning ‘to fear’ and ‘to respect’) furthermore contributed to the separation of people into superordinates and subordinates, and the upholding of bandu. When two persons of different status meet, the formality of the situation determines the degree of submission displayed by the person with lower status.

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\(^49\) Hicks, 1976, op. cit., p. 85.
\(^52\) Ibid, p. 24.
\(^54\) Ibid.
\(^55\) Trindade & Castro, op. cit., p. 21.
\(^56\) Hicks, 1971, op. cit., p. 48.
\(^57\) Ibid, pp.88-89.
Status is based on the rank of one’s descent group, gender - males always superior to females - and a married man’s status is higher than an unmarried. Occupying a political or ritual position also gives status to a person.\(^{58}\)

Among all indigenous groups of East Timor, the house has more significance than being a dwelling of a particular design; it has also great conceptual importance. Among the Tetun, for example, the house corresponds to a being with a face at the front, side walls which are ‘legs’ and front ‘male’ and back ‘female’ doors connected by a ‘backbone’ and ‘body’ beams. The house is divided into two sexual and cosmic halves, female/sacred and to male/secular. The largest room is the female one, which is called the ‘womb’. This room contains the hearth and the paraphernalia associated with rites.\(^{59}\) A similar sexual symbolism seems to occur among all Timorese.

Cunningham, in his study on the Atoni of West Timor, has pointed out that the house may be an effective means to communicate ideas from generation to generation in a preliterate society. He found that the house, with its constituent parts, divisions, form, symbols, and prescriptions concerning order, arrangement, and the behaviour of those included and excluded, may be likened to a mechanical model of the cosmos as conceived by a people. Space and time, man and animals, man and plants, and man and the supernatural are conceived to be ordered by principles related to those expressed in the house, and symbols involving all of these occur in the house.\(^{60}\)

### Agriculture and warfare

Just as cosmology rests on sets of complementary oppositions, it appears that Timorese pre-colonial society revolved around two main activities, agriculture (of the swidden variety) and warfare, especially headhunting.\(^{61}\) War between ethno-linguistic groups appears to have been the normal condition in Timor’s history until recently.

Reasons for warfare were generally borderland disputes, in turn being the consequence of claims by different groups to sandal-trees, trees with bees nests or areca palm trees. Cattle raids were also a constantly recurring cause of war.\(^{62}\) War in Timor meant headhunting. There was, however, a deeper meaning to headhunting than the mere fighting about sandal trees or beehives. Schulte Nordholt, writing about West Timor, has shown the close connection between headhunting and harvest, and between headhunting and marriage, showing that war and death was a condition for life and marriage.\(^{63}\) So has R.E. Downs, who in his *Headhunting in Indonesia* writes that:

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59 Hicks 1976 op. cit., pp. 56-60.
Apart from such specific grounds (sandalwood, beehives etc. G.J.), however, there was the general one that the well-being of the village as a whole and the success of its crops depended on the taking of heads. The ritual character of this activity is obvious, and so, I think, is the general purpose of the ritual performed. The general connection between headhunting and fertility and the general well-being of the village is quite clear. I suggest, therefore, that headhunting is effective in bringing fertility and health because it represents a repetition of the cosmic cycle of life and death and struggle between the two halves of the universe, the Upper and Underworlds. This process cannot obviously not be allowed to stop – hence there must be no end to the taking of heads.64

Headhunting was practised all over the island. There are, however, no records of cannibalism having occurred in Timor. According to Timorese oral history collected by Pieter Middelkoop in West Timor, headhunting was unknown to the Timorese in the distant past. At that time it was possible to move about the whole island, unarmed and unharmed. According to one myth, this changed after an invasion from Macassar, which marked the beginning of warfare and headhunting in Timor.65

The incessant conflicts never led to the creation of large centres of power in Timor, as the goal of wars was simply not to achieve this. Small groups of warriors raided their neighbours, near or distant, in order to ‘harvest heads’ (and slaves). The losing side in the war was forced into ceremonial submission. The starting, the actual carrying out and the ending of wars were highly restricted by tradition and rituals, and there was never any annihilation of the weaker groups. Since headhunting could not be allowed to stop, as Downs has pointed out, the ‘crops’ could not all be harvested at the same time.

The arrival of the Tetun and subsequent pushing of the Atoni to the south-west has parallels to what happened on many other occasions, and on many other islands in the archipelago. Technologically more advanced intruders force the older, less technologically advanced inhabitants into less desirable areas. According to Middelkoop, there is an oral tradition in the Atoni area which tells of how the Tetun brought rice and maize to Timor. As maize is assumed to have been introduced in Southeast Asia by the Portuguese, it seems as Tetun reached some areas of Timor only after the Portuguese arrival in Southeast Asia, about the year 1500.66

This whole scheme has, however, been disputed by Fox, who argues that maize was introduced to Timor by the Dutch only after 1672, from whence it spread rapidly throughout the island.67

As time passed, a striking similarity developed in the agricultural methods of Timor’s various ethno-linguistic groups. Rotation between fields, as opposed to rotation between crops, is the dominant form of agriculture all over the island. The sole exceptions are the South Belu Plain in West Timor, characterised by a more stable system of permanent fields with rotating crops, and the terraced rice fields of the Makassae area of East Timor.68 Since its introduction, maize has been the most important crop for all ethno-linguistic groups on Timor. While it made possible a relatively higher population density, it also meant a higher risk, as dependency on one single crop made any potential disaster worse during the frequent extended dry periods.69 The use of the plow is/was not known. Across the whole island, the same implements are/were used in the slash and burn cultivation, ladang. After the felling of trees and bushes, and the burning of the ground to be used, the planting, the weeding and the harvesting are carried out with the aid of parang, or suak (digging stick) and the tofa tugal (a weeding tool). All groups keep cattle, but they are not used as draught beasts, nor is their manure utilised.70

David Hicks, conducting his fieldwork in 1966 in a Tetun village, found that the basis of its economic life was small gardens, rarely more than one half acre in extent, where the villagers cultivated mainly maize and sweet potatoes. Coconuts and Areca (betel-nuts) were grown in the jungle. Each garden is the exclusive property of the household which created and maintains it. Since ash is the only fertiliser in use, it takes only about six years for a garden to become exhausted, and a new one has to be prepared. A man often possesses two gardens, one of which lies fallow while the other is in use. In clearing the jungle, a man is assisted by every adult member of his household.71

Hicks found a clear division of labour among the villagers. This division was mainly based on gender, but also on age. Ritual prerogatives also influenced the division of labour. Typical masculine activities were jobs where heavy lifting or vigorous cutting were involved, like house-building, clearing the jungle, killing livestock, making implements and hunting. The females planted seeds, weeded the gardens, gathered fruits and vegetables and cooked. Activities shared by both sexes included turning over the soil, harvesting the grain crops and trading in the market. The boys herded buffalo and climbed coconut trees, and generally helped the females. Old persons did not usually participate in any arduous work.72

Despite differences among the ethnic and linguistic groups, in general the most important tasks of women were to bear and raise children, look after the house, cultivate the vegetable gardens, collect firewood and prepare food. Men looked after cattle or went hunting, and both women and men worked in the rice and cornfield.73

In the areas where wet-rice cultivation is used, rice is planted just after the rainy season, or even before the rains have finished, on fields which are tread by buffalo into a state of morass, instead of the buffalo-drawn plows used in Java and Bali. The land used for wet-rice cultivation is allowed to lie fallow for one year after the crop is gathered. What is distinctive about the East Timorese paddy fields is that the farmers rotate irrigated rice with grass, so that besides harvesting their rice they can also graze their cattle on those rice-fields during the dry season.74

69 Fox, op. cit., p. 268.
70 Ibid, p. 74.
71 Hicks 1971, op. cit., pp. 77-79.
72 Ibid, pp. 82-83.
According to Lazarowitz, a man who owns buffalo is an important person, one who can arrange better marriages and create better and debt-free gardens. To own buffalo symbolises the power of one’s group, while lack of buffalo is a symbol of impotency and infertility. The same relationship between buffalo and power is found among the Tetun. Ownership of buffaloes was mainly among the local nobles, but these animals could only be killed at certain ceremonies and the meat was shared by all attendants. Buffalo are never used as draught animals, but the small Timor horse, the *kuda*, is an invaluable transporter of goods and men in the mountainous terrain of Timor, and it is only second to the buffalo as the most appreciated form of bride wealth.

The traditional hunting methods of Timor (outlawed by the Portuguese in the 1950s) are, as Capell noted, interesting because they were similar to methods used by Australian aboriginals. During certain times, men, women, and children co-operated for several days in a large-scale hunt. Large areas were surrounded by fire, and within this ring of fire, groups of hunters waited for the panicking animals. In such a hunt, a large number of prey would be killed, providing food and barter for the local markets.
4. The arrival of colonialism

There is a Timorese myth which describes how a fleet of ships appeared a long time ago, during a big celebration on the island, ‘causing the hearts of the multitude to be very anxious.’ The story goes on (abridged):

One ship sailed to the shore, where it was met by the kings and their warriors. A man from the ship stood up. He was dressed in a black cloak, on his chest he had stars and the moon, his left hand was holding a cross. When asked by a king why he had come, the black-clad man said ‘we are from across the sea, bringing God, to present his teachings to you.’ The king, however, did not allow the men on the ship to disembark for any other purpose than to draw fresh water from a well. When this had been agreed upon, the kings and their warriors returned home. When the Timorese had disappeared, the man in the black cloak ordered his men to secure the anchor in the well. Later, a boy came to draw water. He saw the anchor in the well, and returned to tell his king about this. The king became very angry, and ordered that the anchor be removed. Everyone pulled, but to no avail; they tried to cut the chain, but in vain. The king then asked the men on the ship ‘why have you come and secured the anchor in the well, bringing difficulty to me and my people?’ The man in the black cloak replied, ‘we did it to pull your country to Portugal, because you declined to accept God’s law and his revelations.’ The king challenged the man in the black cloak to try and pull Timor away to Portugal. The man in black climbed to the top of his ship, knelt, clasped his hands and lifted his eyes to heaven for a long period of time. Then he ordered the men on the ship to start rowing. The people on the shore observed something like an earthquake, and the land was shaking as it was drawn along. The people shouted to those aboard the ship to stop because they had no desire to go to Portugal. The man in the black cloak agreed, on the condition that he and his men would be allowed to come ashore to bring the teachings of God. This was allowed, and within a short while the king and his district accepted Gods laws and revelations. From this district, Christianity spread out, across the whole of Timor.1

Portugal reaches Estado da Índia.

The Portuguese arrival in Timor should be viewed in the light of contemporary developments in Europe and, as described in the preceding chapter, in the Indian Ocean area. The Portuguese saga of predominance in Estado da Índia, can be seen as the tip of the iceberg with regard to Europe’s story of emergence as the world’s leader in economic and military might.

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PART 1. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

In ca A.D. 800, at the time of Srivijaya and the Muslim expansion into the Indian Ocean area, the Roman Empire had fallen, and no effective centralised power had taken its place. Rome survived in Byzantium, which possessed a powerful navy, and had expanded into the borderlands of the Black Sea. The Mediterranean area was divided between Western Christendom and Islam. In the course of the seventh century Islam overran North Africa, and during the second half of the eighth century Muslim armies occupied most of the Iberian peninsula.

The Muslims were challenged in the Mediterranean area by Pisa and Genoa in the tenth century, and during the eleventh century the West regained some of the territory lost to the Arabs following a counter offensive led by these city states. During this period of contest between Muslims and Christians, a rumour spread throughout Europe, which filled the Western world with hope of finding an ally behind the lines of the Islamic forces. Otto of Friesing, the German historian, author of a world chronicle, De duabus civitatibus, wrote:

... the recently anointed Bishop of Gabul from Syria ... said that a few years ago a certain John, king and priest of the people living beyond the Persians and Armenians in the extreme Orient, professing Christianity, though of the Nestorian persuasion, marched in war against two Samiard brothers, kings of the Medes and the Persians, and conquered their capital, Ecbatana. Victorious, the said John moved forward in order to come to the aid of the Holy Church. However, when he reached the Tigris and, for lack of boats, was unable to cross it, he marched north where, he had learnt, this river freezes over in winter. But spending several years there without avail, without the frost, and failing in his aim because of the warm weather, he was obliged to return to his native land, the more so since because of the bad climate he had lost many of his soldiers. Apart from this, they say that he is descended from the Magi.2

In 1177 Pope Alexander III sent an emissary with a letter in response to look for the ‘king-pontiff John’. However, all attempts to find the location of the great Christian kingdom in the Far East proved unsuccessful, since, as we know now, it simply did not exist.3

In what is now Portugal, the Muslims arrived during their westward expansion in 711. At first the Muslims garrisoned the whole country, but by ca 750 they withdrew to the more urbanised and economically developed central and southern parts, abandoning any attempt at continuous control of the northern region. By 1147 Lisbon was taken back from the Muslims, and in 1249 the Portuguese took Silves, the last remaining Muslim stronghold.

3 The background to the rumour of Prester João/John is as follows: Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, was anathematised at the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431, on the grounds of having declared that ‘God has no mother’. Receiving support from Persia, the followers of Nestorius established a patriarchate in Persia in 499; from there the Nestorians spread throughout Eastern Asia. In 636 they reached China, where they were allowed to build churches. This welcome changed to persecution when Nestorianism was declared illegal in 845. By the year 1000 Nestorianism had disappeared from China, but not from Central Asia. Nestorianism did not try to subordinate the peoples of the steppes to foreign rulers, nor did it look down upon them as peoples of less worth (as the Chinese did). The persecution in China led in fact to a strengthening of Nestorianism in Central Asia, where it became a powerful anti-Chinese force.
During the long reign of João I (1385-1433) the Portuguese set out on their first journeys of discovery, journeys which would eventually take them all the way to Brazil, Japan and Timor. Let us take a look at the motivations behind this daring enterprise. Boxer gives four main motives, in his own words ‘at the risk of over-simplification.’ These were: (1) crusading zeal against the Muslims, (2) the desire for Guinea gold, (3) the quest for Prester John, and (4) the search for Oriental spices. The crusading impulse and the search for gold were soon reinforced by the quest for Prester John.

This mythical potentate was originally and vaguely located by Europeans as the ruler of a powerful realm somewhere in Central Asia. Over time its presumed location gradually shifted to Ethiopia.

From 1402 onwards a few Ethiopian monks and envoys reached Europe from a Christian Coptic kingdom in the highlands between the Nile and the Red Sea, a kingdom which had been cut off from the rest of the Christian world by Islam’s expansion across North Africa. At least one of these envoys reached Lisbon in 1452. However, the Portuguese only obtained a hazy idea of where this country was. It was undoubtedly believed in Portugal, as elsewhere in Europe, that this mysterious priest-king could prove an invaluable ally against the Muslim powers.

The expansion of Europe overseas began with a minor event in 1415; the seizure by the Portuguese of the Muslim port of Ceuta on the African side of the Straits of Gibraltar. The Portuguese sought only to take the key to the Mediterranean, but the invasion of the North African coast would lead them to the Atlantic Islands and the African coast.

The most outstanding figure in the first stages of Portuguese overseas expansion was Prince Henrique, known in Portugal as o Navegador and o Infante de Sagres, and called by English historians ‘Henry the Navigator’. He was intimately concerned with the Crusade in both its forms; its older form of Mediterranean war against Moor or Turk, and its newer form of a world-wide strategy for the encirclement of Islam, a strategy in which the exploration of the West African coast and the Atlantic islands was only the first move. In 1419 Prince Henrique accepted the office of Governor of the Algarves, the southernmost province of Portugal, where he built up the little settlement of Sagres. His small court consisted largely of men who were interested in seaborne trade or discovery. Sailors, astronomers, ship-builders, cartographers and instrument-makers from other parts of Europe were invited to work at Prince Henrique’s expense and under his direction. Improved ship construction meant, among other things, that the Portuguese could arm their ships with heavy cannons, and new methods of navigation made it possible to construct usable charts of the Atlantic coast. From 1420 Henrique began to send out a series of small but regular expeditions to explore the west coast of Africa.

Progress was slow in the beginning. It was fourteen years before a European ship ventured beyond Cape Bojador, the first major landmark on the African coast. The sailors were held back by the fear that the tropical sea might prove to be boiling hot or that the tropical sun might turn them all into Africans, but eventually a young squire named Gil Eannes took a caravel around Cape Bojador and proved that the sea to the south of it was much the same as the sea to the north. The second psychological obstacle to be overcome was the scepticism of those who thought that no profit could come of the African expeditions. When, in 1441, a caravel brought back from the coast south of Cape Bojador a small parcel of gold dust and some African captives, this scepticism ended. In the next five years Portuguese ships brought back nearly a thousand slaves, either captured or bought from the coastal chiefs between Cape Bojador and Cape Blanco, which had been reached in 1442.

In 1448 Prince Henrique ordered the building of a fortified feitoria (trading post, ‘factory’) on Arguim Island, and, in the second half of the fifteenth century, by means of this feitoria, and by other feitorias in the coastal region of Senegambia, the Portuguese were able to divert a considerable proportion of the Arab-controlled trans-Sahara gold trade to their establishments on the coast. The mixed motivation behind the Portuguese discoveries is apparent from the wording of Papal Bulls in which the Pope authorises the king of Portugal ‘to attack, conquer and subdue saracens, pagans, and other unbelievers, to capture their goods and their territories; to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to transfer their lands and properties to the King of Portugal and his successors’.6

In January 1486, Diogo Cão placed a padrão, a stone marker inscribed with the Portuguese coat of arms, on a hill above a bay in what is now Namibia, and then returned to Portugal. Without knowing it, Cão and his crew almost reached the goal that Portugal had dreamed of for the greater part of a century. Soon after Cão’s arrival in Portugal, Bartholomeu Dias left Lisbon and finally rounded the Cape of Good Hope early in 1488, and returned with the news that the sea route to the Indies was open. New charts had by then given the Portuguese sea captains the courage to sail beyond sight of land for long periods of time and still be confident of reaching their desired destination. This was shown to great effect when Vasco da Gama left on his famous voyage in July 1497, provided with letters of credence addressed to Prester John and to the Raja of Calicut, together with samples of spices, gold and pearls. He had orders to show these to the inhabitants of all places at which he might call, in the hope that these peoples might recognise the valuables and indicate where they might be found.

Initially sailing far out into the Atlantic, presumably not far from the coast of Brazil,7 before turning east, he avoided tropic calms and coastal torrents which he would have encountered if following the coast. Instead, his chosen route enabled him to take advantage of the westerlies of the southern Atlantic for the eastward leg. The fleet sailed for 96 days out of sight of land (as compared to the mere 36 of Columbus) and reached Africa circa 130 miles from the Cape.8

After passing the Cape of Good Hope, da Gama turned to the north and touched at several places on the East African coast for water and fuel. At the port of Malindi he picked up a Muslim pilot, Ibn Majid, and with his help he sailed across the Indian Ocean to Calicut, on the Malabar coast, which he reached on 17 May 1498.

The Hindu ruler of Calicut, the Zamorin, received the Portuguese in a friendly way, and Vasco da Gama secured permission to set up a feitoria in the town. After ascertaining the kind of articles most useful for barter trade, and securing samples of pepper and other products of Malabar, da Gama returned to Lisbon not only with a rich cargo of spices but also with the knowledge that the Portuguese, because of their superior naval power, could establish monopoly of the eastern trade.

Vasco da Gama returned to India with a fleet of twenty ships in February 1502. He reached Calicut on 29 October, 1502, after sinking a Muslim pilgrim ship along the route. He demanded that the Zamorin expel the Arab and Persian traders, and that the Portuguese be given the coastal trade monopoly. The Zamorin refused this, and da Gama replied by firing at Calicut from the sea. He also captured 800 fishermen and had their hands, legs and heads chopped off. The bodies were put in a vessel and allowed to drift ashore.

7 On a similar endeavour in 1500, a fleet led by Pedro Álvares Cabral actually reached Brazil before turning eastwards.
8 McNeill, op. cit., p. 570.
These early voyages demonstrated that a Portuguese fleet could defeat any Asiatic fleet in the open sea. In the words of William McNeill, “the superior numbers of the opposing fleet simply provided the Portuguese with additional targets for their gunnery.” They also made it clear, however, that in fair and open trade the Portuguese could not compete with the Arabs or rely upon the goodwill of the local Hindu rajas, as European manufactures were crude and unattractive in Eastern eyes.

It became apparent that in order to profit fully from their monopoly of the Cape route the Portuguese would have to destroy the Arab trade. Firstly, it was necessary for the Portuguese to hold some strong points on the east coast of Africa in order to secure their route to India and to provision their ships. Arab traders had fortified trading towns along the coast, and the Portuguese seized these. For a power which was commanding on the sea, but with weak land forces, it was obviously the best plan. It secured them against attacks, and at the same time facilitated unrestricted trade.

The Portuguese also found the Christians they had been looking for, in present day Ethiopia. The contemporary chronicler Duarte Barbosa wrote:

> Travelling inland from the position of these same Moorish towns there is a very great realm, that of the Preste Joam, which the Moors calls Abexy (Abessinia). It is very widespread and abounds in fair lands: in it dwell much people, and he holds many kingdoms around subject to him. All the people of this domain are by descent Christians from the time of the teaching of the Blessed Saint Thomas, (and Saint Philip) as they say. This King the Preste Joam is exceedingly rich, and has abundance of gold, inasmuch that up to our time we know of no other King equal to him in this respect; and as I have said, he takes with him a great and splendid court, and he pays the great train of people by whom he is continually attended, through whose help he subdues the neighbouring kings.

By 1505 the Portuguese had realised that there was little use in sending fleets at regular intervals to India to keep the Malabar coast trade for themselves. It was decided to appoint a Viceroy who would remain at his post in India for three years.

9 Ibid, p. 571.
Francisco de Almeida was the first to be appointed. He explored the west coast of India as far as the Gujarat ports, but he did not permanently occupy any port, as the Portuguese fleets could only use the ports through arrangements with the land owners. All the Muslim powers were hostile to them, and, consequently, they looked for assistance from the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt. Egypt entered into an alliance with the Sultan of Gujarat, and outfitted a fleet which appeared in Indian waters in 1507, supported by numerous small coasting crafts belonging to Gujarat and Calicut. A considerable part of the Portuguese fleet was surprised in the harbour of Chaul and almost completely annihilated. Lourenço Almeida, commander of the fleet and Francisco de Almeida’s son, was killed.

This setback did not deter the Portuguese. Afonso de Albuquerque was sent to India to take over as Viceroy from Francisco de Almeida and to take possession of strong central positions, especially Aden and Hormuz. Hormuz was dealt with first. In 1507-1508 de Albuquerque attacked the Arabian ports which were under the power of Hormuz, and in the face of the onslaught Hormuz gave the Portuguese permission to erect a fort on its territory. However, there was a mutiny among the Portuguese, and large parts of de Albuquerque’s fleet sailed to India, where the commander himself was imprisoned by de Almeida. It was not until the arrival of Coutinho, Marshal of Portugal, that de Albuquerque was installed as Viceroy.11,12

The Marshal had been sent to India with the specific order to destroy Calicut, but in the attempt to do so he was killed along with most of his men. In February 1510 de Albuquerque sailed from Cochin with twenty-three ships heading for Calicut. Learning that Goa was defenseless he diverted his course and took this port on 1 March 1510. Two months later the King of Bijapur sent a large army to Goa which ousted the Portuguese. De Albuquerque returned to Goa with a larger fleet for the final conquest. On the morning of 25 November 1510 de Albuquerque attacked the city. He described the battle in his letter to the Portuguese King in the following words:

I then burnt the city and put everything to sword, and for days continuously the people shed blood. Wherever they were found and caught, no life was spared to any Musalman, and their mosques were filled up and set on fire. We counted 6,000 dead bodies. It was, my Lord, a great deed, well fought and well finished.13

Goa thus became the first Indian territory to be ruled directly by Europeans since Alexander the Great. In Goa the Portuguese obtained not only the town and island, but also an area on the mainland sufficient to ensure supplies for her fleets.14

Contacts with the motherland were maintained through the Carreira da Índia, the term used for the annual round voyage which Portuguese ships made between Lisbon and Goa. The round voyage between Lisbon and Goa could take about a year and a half in the most favourable circumstances. The actual sailing time in each direction was usually some six or seven months, with the addition of a stay of about four months at Goa or Cochin to load the return cargo of Indian pepper and textiles, Ceylon cinnamon, Indonesian cloves and Chinese silks and porcelain.15

An outward-bound Carreira da Índia with a crew of 120 usually carried at least 400 or 500 soldiers destined for service in the East. Apart from the soldiers, there would often be a

14 The 'fleets' maintaining the contacts between Portugal and Estado da Índia were no great armadas. In 1683 this fleet consisted of two vessels, the one in 1685 consisted of five, there were again two ships in 1750. C. R. Boxer, From Lisbon to Goa, 1500 – 1750. London: Variorum Reprints, 1984, p. 43.
number of missionaries. Very few women went out with their husbands, and most of the women who made the India voyage were so called *Orfãos del Rei*, ‘Orphans of the Crown’, girls of marriageable age who were provided with dowries in the form of government posts for whomever would marry them. Mortality on the Carreira da Índia was very high. During the first 100 years, an average of only sixty percent of the men who left Portugal reached India.

After obtaining Goa, de Albuquerque immediately outfitted an expedition to Malacca, which was taken in 1511. In *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, a contemporary chronicle of Portuguese expansion into Estado da Índia, one can see clearly how impressed the Portuguese were upon arriving in this great Eastern entrepôt. Barbosa wrote:

> In the city and realm of Malacca dwell up to now great wholesale merchants of every kind, both Moors and Heathen ... men of great estates and owning many ships which they call juncos. They trade everywhere in goods of all kinds. Numbers of ships also come hither to take cargoes of sugar, very fine four-masted ships; they bring great store of silk, very fine raw silk, porcelain in abundance, damasks, brocades, coloured satins, musk, rhubarb, sewing silk in various colours, (much iron), saltpetre, great store of fine silver, pears in abundance, sorted seed-pearls, gilded coffers, fans, and many other baubles; and all this they sell at good prices to the dealers of the country, and in exchange therefore they take away pepper, incense, Cambay cloths dyed in grain, saffron, coral shaped and strung, and ready for shaping, printed and white cotton cloths which come from Bengal, vermilion, quicksilver, opium, and other goods and drugs of Cambaya ... From this city of Malaca ships sail also to the Isles of Maluco, there to take in cargoes of cloves, taking thither for sale much Cambay cloth, cotton, and silk of all kinds, other cloths from Paleacate and Bengala, quicksilver, wrought copper, bells and basins, and a Chinese coin, pepper, porcelain, garlic, onions, and other Cambaya goods of all kinds. Thus they sail from this city of Malaca to all the islands in the whole of this sea, and to Timor, whence they bring the whole of the white sanders wood, which is greatly esteemed among the Moors and is worth much; and thither they take iron, axes, knives, cutlasses, swords, cloths from Paleacate (and Cambaya), copper, quicksilver, vermilion, tin, lead, great store of Cambaya beads in exchange wherefore they take away, as well as the sanders-wood, honey, wax and slaves. These ships also sail from Malaca to the islands which they call Bandan to get cargoes of nutmegs and mace.

The Portuguese system of control in Asia was now complete. They had one fleet to block the Red Sea and one to patrol the western coast of India, and had installed a Governor-General at Goa. They built a series of forts and trading posts and were in control of three great markets, Malacca, Calicut, and Ormuz. They also established a subsidiary stop at Aden. Malacca became a giant storage house and entrepôt in this system, and it was in Malacca the Portuguese learned about the Moluccas, the Banda islands, and of Timor.

António de Abreu left Malacca leading a fleet in search of the Isles of Maluco (the Moluccas, the famed Spice Islands) in November 1511. He reached Amboina and Banda and returned to Malacca at the end of 1512. While de Abreu returned to Malacca, the captain of one of the ships in the expedition, Francisco Serrão, continued on to Ternate, where he obtained promises of loyalty to Portugal from the local ruler.

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16 Goa attained the questionable distinction of becoming the second headquarters outside Rome of the Holy Court of Inquisition in 1560.
18 Rao, op. cit., p. 35.
In the Moluccas, however, the Portuguese soon met with rivals, as the Spaniards claimed that the meridian of partition 360 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, as defined in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, would, if extended to the Eastern Hemisphere, bring these islands within the Spanish sphere. The circumnavigation of the globe, from east to west, by the Portuguese Magalhães (on behalf of Spain!) led to a Spanish settlement in 1522 on the island of Tidore near Ternate, and a long struggle began. The Moluccas were then awarded to Spain, but Portugal bought out the Spanish claims when the Treaty of Tordesillas was revised in 1524.21

Timor – the Portuguese arrival

The exact date of the Portuguese’s first arrival in Timor is not known. We know from Duarte Barbosa’s book that they gained knowledge of the island after capturing Malacca in 1511. Humberto Leitão, basing his opinion on records of de Abreu’s journey to the Moluccas in 1511-1512, states that Timor could not have been sighted by de Abreu’s ships.22 In 1512 Timor appears in the charts of Francisco Rodrigues.23 There is a letter from Rui de Brito Patalim, Governor of Malacca, to Afonso de Albuquerque, the Viceroy, dated 6 January 1514, in which he states that no ship was sent to Timor in that year, though he notes his intention to send one the next year. In a letter to King Manuel (also dated 6 January 1514), Rui de Brito Patalim describes Timor as an island with much sandalwood, honey and wax; a big island populated by heathens who possess no ships of their own.24 After contact with Timor was eventually established, ca 1515, the Portuguese began sending ships there regularly.25 From 1516, there is a voyage from Malacca to Timor by Jorge Fogasa documented in a letter from Malacca to King Manuel. This letter also states that the expedition brought back lucrative amounts of sandalwood, and that there had been violence involved in the effort. The letter states bluntly that “they left a land in revolt, since the Portuguese men bludgeoned the merchants of the land”.26 The first places to be visited appears to have been the regions of Mena (in present day Biboki in West Timor) and Servião on the north coast; the latter probably being the port of the inland kingdom of the same name.27

At an early stage the Portuguese found out that the anchorages on the south side of Timor were not good enough in heavy winds. At times there were so many boats visiting Timor that they had to wait in line for the sandalwood cargo.28 I will present a rather lengthy (although abridged) account of Timor, since it is the oldest description which gives any detailed information about the island. Upon arriving in Timor from the east rather than from the west, Antonio Pigafetta, a chronicler of Magalhães’ circumnavigation of the world, wrote:

21 Great Britain, op. cit., p.19.
24 Leitão, op. cit., p. 54.
28 Leitão, op.cit., p. 55.
On Saturday the 25th of January 1522 ... we arrived at a large island called Timor. I went ashore to speak to the head man of a village called Amaban, about his providing us with victuals. He offered me buffaloes, pigs, and goats, but when it was a question of the goods which he wanted in exchange, we could not come to an agreement ... . As we were constrained by hunger, we took the measure of detaining on board the ship the chief of another village named Balibo, who had come in good faith with a son of his; and we imposed upon him as a ransom for recovering his liberty, to give six buffaloes, ten pigs and ten goats. He, being much afraid that we should kill him, quickly gave orders to have all this brought to us; and as there were only five goats and two pigs, they gave us instead an additional buffalo. We then sent him ashore with his son, and he was well pleased when we not only left him free, but also gave him some linen, some Indian cloths of silk and cotton, some hatchets, some Indian knives, scissors, looking glasses, and some of our knives.

In this island there are buffaloes, pigs, and goats, as has been said; there are also fowls and parrots of various colours. There is also rice, bananas, ginger, sugar, sugar canes, oranges, lemons, beans and almonds. We had approached that part of the island where there were some villages with their chiefs or head men. On the other side of the island are the dwellings of four kings, and their districts are named Oibich, Lichsana, Suai, and Cabanaza. Oibich is the largest place. We were told that in the mountain near Cabanaza, very much gold is found, and its inhabitants buy whatever they want with small pieces of gold. All the trade in sandal wood and wax, carried on by the people of Malacca and Java, is done here; and indeed, we found here a junk which had come from Lozon (Luzon) to trade in sandal wood; for white sandal wood only grows in this country. These people are Gentiles ... The merchandise most fitting for bartering here for sandal wood is red cloth, linen, hatchets, iron, and nails. The island is entirely inhabited. It extends a long way from east to west, and little from north to south. Its south latitude is in 10 deg., and the longitude 174 deg. 30 min. from the line of demarcation. In all these islands that we visited in this archipelago, the evil of Saint Job\(^29\) prevailed, and more here than in any other place, where they call it ‘for Franki’, that is to say, Portuguese illness.\(^30\)

The Portuguese did not attempt to establish any settlement on Timor at this early stage, but decided to set up bases nearby. They did this at two spots on Flores, an island lying only two sailing days from Timor. One was on the south coast, where the Portuguese built a fortress on a small island in the Bay of Ende. People from the main island poured into Ende and founded several villages when the Portuguese trade was booming.\(^31\) The second Portuguese settlement was on the island of Solor, only a short distance from Flores. The first fortress on Solor was built in 1566 by Dominican priests who were sent as missionaries by the King of Portugal.\(^32\) They built a high, massive stone wall around the huts of the Portuguese merchants, and positioned about fifty cannons at the corner towers.\(^33\)

\(^{29}\) Crawfurd argues that this disease was in fact syphilis. The passage in Pigafetta is dated from 1522, and at that time the Portuguese had been already about ten years in the archipelago. John F. R. S. Crawfurd, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands & Adjacent Territories*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 443.


\(^{31}\) Daus, op. cit., p. 42.

\(^{32}\) In a foreword to a book printed in 1569-1570 the Dominican Padre António Taveira is said to have converted 5,000 people on Timor to Christianity. Leitão, op. cit., p. 54-56. The Dominicans maintained that they had converted 100,000 Christians by 1613. The Dutch, however, counted only 12,250 local Christians at that time. Nevertheless, the Dominicans had clearly succeeded in establishing a Christian enclave comprising a substantial number of believers in the midst of a Muslim and animist region (Daus, op. cit., p. 43.)

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
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For the first quarter of a century of the fort’s existence its captain was chosen by the Dominican Prior at Malacca, but later the appointment was transferred to the Viceroy in Goa, leading the Dominicans to complain bitterly about the change of system, since the captain of Solor was no longer under their control. The first port in Timor to be visited by the Dominicans appears to have been Mena, where in the late 1580s one Fr. Belchior de Luz was well received by the local king, and constructed a church. The polygamous king did not convert, but when Belchior left the island the king’s daughter accompanied him to Malacca and was baptized there.

Macau- centre of the trade with Japan and Timor

After capturing Goa and Malacca, and reaching the Spice Islands and Timor, the Portuguese finally took Diu (which Francisco de Almeida had burnt, and then left, in 1509, in revenge for the loss of his son) on 13 February 1537, after the local ruler had fallen into the sea and drowned during negotiations on board a Portuguese ship. The Portuguese were now the uncontested rulers of the Indian Ocean, and could divert some of their attention to places farther east.

From their safe haven at Malacca, the Portuguese established themselves at Macau about 1555. From here they were well-placed for developing their trade with Japan, which had begun just over a decade earlier with the accidental arrival in Tanegashima of a few Portuguese on a Chinese junk. Macau gave them a secure base on the south China coast, with easy access to the great market of Canton. Their position in Japan was consolidated when they were allowed by the Shogun to use the fishing-village Nagasaki as terminal port for the annual Nao do trato or Great Ship from Macau.

The Portuguese trade with Timor was also organised from Macau, via the fortress on Solor. It was originally free to all who could afford to pay the freight charges. Crown officials attempted to monopolise the trade in 1631 and 1674, but reaction against this was so strong that the Timor trade was left open to all. A small number of ships left Macau yearly and sailed to Timor, in accordance with a system administered from Goa. The Camara, the local senate of Goa, sent a list of all ship owners in Macau.

35 Gunn, op. cit., p. 27.
36 Rao, op. cit., p. 34.
38 Boxer 1948, op. cit., p. 195.
In Goa it was decided, according to a rotating system, which ship owners would be allowed to make the Timor journey. In reality, informal agreements between the ship owners were worked out if the decision from Goa was not to everybody’s liking. A third of the ship’s loading space was reserved for the ship owner, with the rest split between the citizens of Macau. This was done through a system where one could purchase a bague, a trade certificate giving the right to a part of the space on the ship. In this way the whole of Macau, ‘from the Captain-General to the widows and orphans who ventured their mites in the bagues’ became involved in the Timor trade. The venture depended upon the seasonal monsoons, with ships leaving at the end of the year and returning in May-September. This fact necessitated the development of entrepots such as those on Flores and Solor, where traders waited for the change of winds, and priests and officials eventually settled permanently.

The end of the Aviz dynasty – the poet Camões

The Portuguese seaborne empire had now reached its maximum size and importance. The zenith of Portuguese influence in Estado da Índia was, however, not to last for long. One reason for this was the introduction, by King João III, of the Inquisition in 1536. The Inquisition became a very powerful force in the country. In Vising’s words ‘with the coming of the Inquisition the first seed was sown in the downfall of Portugal’. Religious zealotry was not, however, introduced by João III. The Jews, who had been accepted into Portugal by João II when they were forced to leave Spain, were expelled from Portugal during the reign of Manuel I. Their presence in Portugal was part of the explanation of the success story, and their absence was to become one of the reasons behind the downfall.

It is also important to note that the enormous profits from the trade were not invested in any kind of new projects but, rather, were squandered in grand style for the upkeeping of the royal court, for feudal style luxury consumption, and for the acquisition of great estates.

Morocco had been largely ignored by the Portuguese kings during the successful era of expansion, but when Sebastião assumed the throne in 1568, the young king launched an aggressive policy in Morocco that resulted in a disaster at el-Kasr el-Kebir (Alcazar-Quivir) in 1578, where both King Sebastião and his army were lost. The 500 ships and 17,000 soldiers had been partly financed by foreign loans, and in order to repay these loans and to pay ransom for the prisoners taken by the Arabs, Portugal had to empty her treasure chests. In 1580 some four centuries of Portuguese independence ended, when the Iberian peninsula was united under Philip II of Spain with very little opposition.

This was the end of the reign of the Aviz dynasty. It was also the year in which the poet Camões died, as he expressed it, with his country. While the chronicler of Portuguese expansion was Duarte Barbosa, its poet, visionary and tragic hero was Luís Vaz de Camões. He was a fidalgo, a nobleman, and he spent several years in Lisbon socialising at the court and aristocratic salons after studying in Coimbra. He wrote plays and poems, influenced by the earlier Portuguese writer Vicente Gil, classical comedy, and the novels of chivalry.

He joined a Portuguese force at Ceuta and served there for two years, but after returning to Lisbon was thrown in jail after a dispute in which he wounded a person. After a year he was set free on condition that he go to India.

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40 Gunn, op. cit., p. 18.
42 Ibid, p. 33.
He reached Goa, where he joined a military expedition along the Malabar coast, and cruised in the straits of Malacca.

Once in the east he began the preparation of the material for his great poem *Os Lusiadas*. After a rather miserable life in Estado da Índia he returned to Lisbon in 1570. Two years later the first edition of *Os Lusiadas* appeared. The king gave him a pension, albeit very small and irregularly paid, and his last years were spent in poverty and obscurity. What he regarded as the moral and social decadence of the nation, and the final disaster of Alcazar-Quivir, which left the country open to Philip of Spain, deeply affected the patriotic Camões. In 1579 came the plague. Camões caught the sickness and died ‘with his country’ while Spanish troops were advancing on Lisbon.

Camões’ poem *Os Lusiadas* has become Portugal’s national epic. Its celebration of the conquest of the seas inspired national unity during sixty years of Spanish domination, and from 1580 to 1640 there were thirty-six editions of the book published. *Os Lusiadas* (the Lusiads) is a poetic name for the Portuguese, based on the name Luso. Luso was, according to legend, a son or friend of Bacchus, but it is also the name of a legendary king, from some thousand years BC. The old name Lusitania, used by the Romans to denote their territory on the western part of the Iberian Peninsula, supposedly derives from this name. The title is often misunderstood, in that the (incorrectly translated) title *the Lusiad* is often used along the same line as *the Iliad*. The book has ten *canto* (songs) consisting of a various number of stanzas in *ottave rime*, a style borrowed from older Italian poetry, in which Camões outlines the history of Portugal. In the ninth canto, the goddess Venus celebrates the Portuguese with a festivity. She brings them to an island, where they are entertained by nymphs of the sea. Vasco da Gama is given none less than Tety, the goddess of the sea. The festivities continue in the tenth canto, where Tety brings Vasco da Gama to the top of a high mountain, and, on an atlas hovering above them, shows him the whole world and the stars. This description of the world is quite long, sixty-two stanzas. Stanza 34, canto 10 of *the Lusiad*, translated into English by Richard Fanshawe and printed in 1940 reads as follows:

> There (look you!) is Timor, that fends the Wood Call’d Saunders, Physicall and Odorous. See Sunda, painted at half face, so broad that the South-side lies now quite hid from Us! The Natives here (and Those who from abroad Travail the Land) of a miraculous River report, which, as it slides alone, The wood that falls therein converts to Stone.44

Thus, by being included in both the Portuguese national epic, *Os Lusiadas*, and in its Indonesian equivalent, *Nagarakrtagama*, Timor is already by the 1500s included in two national epics. Like the *Nagarakrtagama*, *Os Lusiadas* will turn up again in this book, then serving as a source of inspiration to those who attempted in vain to uphold the disappearing glories of Estado da Índia.

**Portugal under Spain 1580-1640.**

From the outset the union between Portugal and Spain had some clear advantages for the Portuguese. One was the abolition of customs frontiers on the peninsula, which gave Portugal duty-free access to Spanish wheat. A second advantage was that the Portuguese bourgeoisie gained access to the Spanish empire, which had by 1580 reached its zenith. From the Spanish point of view, the union had the advantage of allowing access to new financial networks. Portuguese bankers (almost all *marranos*, Jewish converts) were now able to enter the

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43 Vising, op. cit., p. 54.
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Castilian financial circuit, thereby linking up with the Amsterdam exchange, which had taken over from Antwerp as Europe’s commercial centre. Access to Spain also meant access to Spanish America. In addition, the Portuguese could profit from their flourishing Brazilian sugar colony under protection of the Spanish fleets.  

On the other hand, the union also meant deep involvement of Portugal in the pan-European affairs of the Habsburg Empire. Spain’s many enemies became those of Portugal as well. One of the fundamental conditions that had permitted the rise of Portugal, peaceful relations with Europe, disappeared. The Portuguese fleet found protection by Spain, but it also suffered severely from its participation in Philip’s armada in 1588, and from the operations of the English fleets round the Azores. Spain banned the Dutch and the English from trading with the Portuguese, thereby giving these powers a strong incentive to find their own way to the source of spices and other goods from the east. During the early 1590s the Dutch expanded their trade in the Mediterranean, the Levant, and the south Atlantic, and gathered enough information about Estado da Índia to understand that the Portuguese claim to being ‘the lords of the conquest, navigation, and commerce of Ethiopia, India, Arabia and Persia’, as implied by the title assumed by king Manuel I in 1501, was far from realistic in the late sixteenth century. It was this expanding young nation that arrived in the Indonesian waters in the early seventeenth century, eager to cut in on a trade which up until then had been monopolised by Portugal. This venture was organised in 1602 under the aegis of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (the United Netherlands East India Company), hereafter referred to as the VOC. The VOC was given a monopoly of Dutch trade and navigation east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan. The governing body, the Heeren XVII, was endowed with almost limitless authority. It could draw up peace and alliance treaties, and wage defensive war. For all practical purposes, the VOC could, and did, act as a state.  

Repercussions in Estado da Índia  
The most important thing which happened in the Estado da Índia during the period of Portugal’s union with Spain was the arrival of the Dutch and English in that part of the world. Considering that a weakened Portugal was barred by Spain from trading with their northern European rivals, the latter’s desire to compete with Portugal at the very source of the valuable spice trade is not difficult to understand. As de Jongh writes, ‘once the process of decline had set in fully it was hard to conceive that other European powers would remain inactive and leave a “vacuum” in the Indonesian archipelago’.  

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Francis Drake made a voyage to the Archipelago in 1579, followed by James Lancaster in 1591. These English explorers were followed by Dutch traders, who landed at Bantam on Java in 1596. This first voyage was badly organised. Out of four ships and 249 men, three ships and 89 men returned with only a small load of pepper. Even so, the cargo of pepper covered the cost of the endeavour, and even returned a profit. Twenty-two ships were sent in 1598. When they returned, it was said that ‘so long as Holland has been Holland, such richly laden ships have never been seen’.49 After this makeshift beginning, the Dutch founded the VOC and decided to wrestle this rich trade from the Portuguese by military means, beginning with an abortive attempt at blockading Goa in 1603.

During the leadership of Jan Pietieszoon Coen, ‘that grim Calvinist’ in the words of Boxer,50 the VOC founded in 1619 a fortress at present day Jakarta, after having received permission from the local ruler to expand an already existing trading station. When the ruler of the area pointed out that he had not given permission to build a fortress, the Dutch destroyed his castle. Jakarta was christened Batavia in 1621, and in the same year Coen had most of the inhabitants of the Banda Islands massacred, after which slave-plantations were established there. A Spanish-Portuguese fleet was destroyed by the Dutch off the Philippines in 1615, and Macau was attacked unsuccessfully in 1622 and 1627.

From the outset, the Dutch tried to take over the sandalwood trade of Timor. They started trading on the north coast of Timor in 1613, and the ships of the VOC came to Kupang on the western tip of Timor regularly during the 1630s.51 In spite of this onslaught the Portuguese managed oddly enough to strengthen their positions in the eastern part of Estado da Índia, through moving their settlement on Solor to Larantuka on Flores Island, and by establishing an important Portuguese presence in Macassar.52 Portuguese merchants had frequented Macassar during the sixteenth century, but the real growth of their trade and influence occurred, oddly enough, after the Islamisation of Macassar in the years 1605-07. In the beginning the nobles had the Portuguese trade on their behalf, while later there were Portuguese pilots on Macassarese ships.53 In the 1620s dozens of Portuguese ships called at Macassar yearly, and there were sometimes as many as 500 Portuguese ashore. They arrived in November-December and left the following May, using Macassar as an entrepot for the sale of Chinese silks and Indian cotton textiles, which they exchanged for sandalwood from Timor, cloves from the Moluccas, and diamonds from Borneo. The Portuguese staying there looked upon Macassar as a second and better Malacca. The friendly relations between the Muslim Macassarese and the Portuguese were strengthened by their common dislike of the growing Dutch presence, and with these newcomers’ attempts to monopolise the spice-trade of the Moluccas.54

54 Boxer 1988a, op. cit., p. 3.
In Solor there was a split within the Portuguese community during the last part of the fifteenth century. The missionaries wanted to use the influence of the merchants to convert more people to the Catholic faith. The merchants, on the other hand, wanted the missionaries to convert some groups, but to leave others untouched, depending on the trade opportunities that arose. A flood of letters of complaint from both parties reached Goa and Lisbon. The conflict could only be resolved by separating the two groups. Just before 1600 the priests were left alone in their castle on Solor. Only two hours away by sea, at Larantuka on the island of Flores, the sandalwood merchants built their own town. The officially appointed Portuguese administrative and military head, the captain, also settled in Larantuka. Macau’s trade with Timor became even more important after the Dutch arrival in the area. At the beginning of the seventeenth century Dutch superiority at sea in the Straits of Malacca made it possible for them to intercept Portuguese ships between Goa and Macau, forcing the Macau merchants to concentrate on their trade with Japan. In 1613, the Dutch appeared at Solor, after having expelled the Portuguese from Amboina in 1605, and from the Moluccas in 1607. The Portuguese priests got into their boats together with their local Christian followers and were taken to Larantuka. The Portuguese were thus reunited. In 1615 the Dutch abandoned Solor, but returned in 1618. As the Dutch could not compete with the Portuguese in the sandalwood trade, the new Dutch commander changed his loyalties, and, in 1625, went over to the Portuguese side. The Dutch Company sent a new commander to Solor, but he too changed sides. The Dutch governor of Batavia then ordered Solor to be evacuated, rather than sending still one more commander there.

The Portuguese Dominicans reoccupied it in April 1630. Their eagerness to return to Solor was based not only on their animosity against the merchants of Larantuka – Solor was also famed for its rice, fruits and vegetables, excellent drinking water and plentiful sheep, goats and buffaloes. The contemporary chronicler António Bocarro, writing in 1635, mentions the prosperity of the Solor settlement, and its prospering sandalwood trade from Timor with Macau. This commerce was now carried on via Macassar in ships manned with native Christians. However, after defeating still another Dutch attack on Solor in June 1636, the Dominicans decided that they had had enough. They abandoned the fort and it remained untended until a third occupation by the Dutch in February 1646. The unquestioned centre of Portuguese influence in the Lesser Sunda Islands was now Larantuka.

55 Daus, op. cit., pp. 43-44.
57 Daus, op. cit., pp. 44-45.
58 Boxer, 1948, op. cit., p. 177-179.
59 Ibid.
It was not Dutch competition but Japanese mistrust which finally ended the Macau-Nagasaki trade. The Japanese, not wanting any missionary activities in their territory, expelled the Jesuits from Nagasaki in 1614, but the Portuguese continued to smuggle priests into Japan disguised as laymen.\(^{60}\) After the Shimabara rebellion of 1637-1638, one of the bloodiest episodes in Japanese history, in which the peasantry rose against their feudal oppressors, the Japanese authorities, suspecting Portuguese influences behind the uprising, decided to enforce a policy of national isolation, allowing Dutch and Chinese traders into Nagasaki only under rigorous supervision.\(^{61}\) A Portuguese delegation from Macau came to Japan to appeal against this decision in 1640. Thirteen of the delegation were allowed to live after having watched sixty-one others beheaded. They were sent back to Macau to convince the Portuguese merchants and priests that it would be wise to stay out of Japan.\(^{62}\) Despite this important loss, and despite the loss of their two first strongholds in the area, Solor and Ende (lost in native rebellions in 1605 and again in 1630), Portuguese trade in the south-eastern part of Estado da Índia, in Macassar and Larantuka, was flourishing. Sandalwood from Timor formed an increasingly important part of this trade.

**Portugal independent**

Although the Portuguese gained a few advantages during the first decades of the union with Spain, this did not last for long. The Spanish began to react against the Portuguese advantage in banking, a reaction which took the form of anti-Jewish xenophobia. The Portuguese were also increasingly unhappy about the Spanish inability to offer them the protection they needed. When the Dutch occupied parts of Brazil this was attributed by the Portuguese to the continuing Dutch-Spanish conflict. In any case, the Luso-Atlantic trade, which up until 1630 maintained itself far better than the Seville-Atlantic trade, began to decline. The difficulties in Brazil were compounded by the loss of the West African gold trade to the English and Dutch in 1638.\(^{63}\) Resentment of Spanish rule developed for both domestic and imperial reasons. According to the terms of the union, each portion of the Habsburg monarchy would retain nearly complete autonomy. Philip II respected this agreement, but his successors tried to squeeze all possible resources out of the Habsburg domains, including Portugal, as a result of the costly Spanish defeat in the Thirty Year War. A revolt of the Catalans against Castile in May 1640 instigated a rebellion among the Portuguese in December of the same year. The successful uprising was headed by the Duke of Bragança, who was crowned King João IV of the once again independent Portugal.

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\(^{60}\) Boxer, 1988b, op. cit., p.12.  
\(^{61}\) Ibid, p.154.  
\(^{62}\) Ibid, p. 12.  
\(^{63}\) Wallerstein, op. cit., pp. 182-184.
5 Showdown on Timor

The Topasses

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Larantuka, on Flores, came to prosper as a Portuguese trade centre for the south-eastern archipelago after the loss of Solor. Larantuka attracted not only merchants, but also deserters and adventurers, from Javanese to Japanese. When Malacca was taken by the Dutch in 1641, the remaining Portuguese from all over the Far East converged in Macau, Macassar and Larantuka. When the Dutch attacked Macassar in 1660, most of the Portuguese who lived there moved to Larantuka. The Dutch conquest of Macassar had the perhaps unforeseen effect of strengthening the position of the Portuguese in Larantuka, just as the fall of Malacca had led to the growth of their influence at Macassar. The undisputed leader of the exiles from Macassar was Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo who sometimes acted as the Viceroy of Goa’s envoy to Batavia. Figueiredo appointed Simão Luís ‘a monster of cruelty’ as Captain-Major of Larantuka. According to Dutch contemporary sources Simão Luís on one occasion forced the population of Lifau (more of Lifau below) to drink the blood and eat the flesh of a local rebellious king who had been killed by the Portuguese. As Larantuka’s population increased, some newcomers moved to two new settlements nearby. Twenty kilometres to the south the town of Konga was established, and on the neighbouring island of Adonara the town of Wureh was founded.

The earlier-established Portuguese and the new immigrants of various backgrounds became a single community, marrying women from the region. The first name given (by others) to the resulting mixed population was Topasses, a word of somewhat unclear origins. It may have derived from the Hindi word topi, hat, or from the Tamil word tuppasi, interpreter. The same term was applied to the corresponding class of Eurasians and native Christians in India, Malacca and Batavia by the Dutch and English. Topasses was too general a term, however, to suit the special conditions prevailing in Larantuka. The Dutch instead came to use the (derogatory) term Swarte Portugezen, black Portuguese. The people for whom it was coined, on the other hand, insisted on being called Larantuqueiros. I follow the established usage in the literature and use the term Topasses.

The Topasses established a sphere of interest reaching far beyond their own settlements, with Larantuka, Wureh, and Konga being the power centres of the region. Simão Luís died soon after the frightful display of cruelty related above, which led to a power struggle between two large families, the da Costas and the Hornays, the latter being descendants of one
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of the Dutch commanders who had deserted from Solor. Family members and party allies robbed and murdered one another until 1750, when they agreed on a rotating system of leadership.

Theoretically the entire area ruled by the Topasses was under the sovereignty of Portugal, but in practice it was an independent territory. After the Dutch capture of Malacca, the Portuguese in Macau, Macassar and Larantuka were effectively cut off from Goa, the seat of the government of Estado da Índia. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries only two supply ships sailed from Goa to Larantuka, and not a single Portuguese official representative visited Larantuka during that period.

The Topasses used Portuguese as their official language during assembly meetings, in treaties and in church. The use of Portuguese on formal occasions signified a relationship with higher authorities in Goa and Lisbon. Malay was used when talking to non-Christian locals or when travelling to places such as Sulawesi and Timor. Up until the early 1640s the Topasses had been happy to conduct trade with Timor from their base at Larantuka, but about that time they decided to establish themselves at the very source of the sandalwood. There was at the same time a tendency on the part of the different rulers on Timor to become as independent as possible of the power centres of Wehale and Sonba’i. This is the context in which some of the rulers on the coast converted to Christianity, thus becoming allies of the Portuguese.

Macassarese traders from Sulawesi had for many years visited Timor, where they also established political contacts and seems to have married into the local exchange system. At the beginning of 1640 the Moslem ruler of Tolo, near Macassar, challenged the Portuguese presence on Timor. Three coastal towns were burnt down, and some sandalwood and numerous people were carried off, while some of the kingdoms, including Wehale, agreed to pay tribute to Tolo and embrace Islam. Wehale in its turn persuaded others, notably Servião, Mena and Lifau to follow suit.

The Topasses decided that it was time to act. In May 1642 Captain-Major Francisco Fernandes landed on Timor, accompanied by ninety musketeers and three Dominican friars. Marching across the island from the north coast to the south coast, gained the submission of Mena and Sonba’i in the Mutis region of West Timor and then continued to Wehale on the south coast, which he burned down. After this show of force, the rulers of Wehale and the Sonba’i of the Atoni accepted Christianity. Fox considers this exploit to be ‘the single most decisive event in the history of Timor.’

The news of the destruction of Wehale spread rapidly, leading kings of other realms to convert to Christianity. The Topasses now established a foothold at Lifau, on Timor’s north coast. Initially, they were contended with dwellings of a rather make-shift character where they spent some weeks or months trading and waiting for winds to change. The settlement

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6 Boxer, op. cit., p. 8.
7 Ibid, pp. 46-47.
8 Daus, op. cit., pp. 48-50.
13 Ibid.
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became more permanent only in 1702, when António Coelho de Guerreiro, dispatched as Governor from Goa, moved the seat of government from Larantuka to Lifau with men and material brought from Macau.\(^{15}\)

Before that, however, the Topasses once more dealt brutally with Wehale. In 1665 Wehale and Cailaco were suspected of having conspiratory contacts with Macassar, and led by Mateus da Costa the Topasses successfully attacked the two realms and sold many of the captured inhabitants as slaves.\(^{16}\)

With the defeat of Wehale, the control by kingdoms over their subordinate princedoms (suco) were lessened. This enabled the invading group of Topasse families to take over the senior positions previously occupied by kingdom and princedom heads in exchange of tribute, services, and men and women between clans and villages. Through their increasing assumption of this role in the course of the eighteenth century, the Topasses were able to exercise political influence within the Timorese princedoms.\(^{17}\) As Hägerdal points out, this subjugation was more like a vague tributary relationship than a colonial rule as generally understood, and meant that the domains had to observe Portuguese trading regulations. The Portuguese kept their stronghold in Lifau in West Timor, which meant that the possibilities of monitoring the eastern areas were limited. The preponderance of Tetun (Belones) aristocracies in large parts of eastern Timor apparently made it feasible to lump the new conquests together in a “Provincia dos Bello”.\(^{18}\)

The emphasis on the value of exchange in Timor was thus reinforced by the Topasses who used the system of kinship exchange for the purposes of their own political control. Consequently, although the Timorese economy was now directed to external needs, and although control of its political system shifted to an external grouping, the effects of these changes were limited. What, in other societies, might have produced fundamental structural changes, resulted rather in the maintenance of basic aspects of Timorese society. This seems to indicate how Timorese society was able to reproduce its indigenous economic, cultural, and social systems despite foreign control. Once established, this co-existence of external control with indigenous structural reproduction continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fox points out that while it is impossible to speak of European domination on Timor at this time apart from limited areas along the north coast; this marginal physical presence had effects over far larger areas. For one thing, the centre of Timorese alliances shifted from south, Wehale, to north, Lifau and its vicinity. This meant that political events in other parts of Timor were from now on in some ways influenced by the European presence, while the European presence in its turn was affected by the ongoing struggle between Topasses, Portuguese and the Dutch.\(^{19}\)

The Portuguese/Topasse strategic approach used respect for traditional institutions as a tool. Entering blood oaths was a local method to establish peace and worked well for the Portuguese in pacifying the local kings and to receive their support. They also married the local kings’ daughters to establish important wife giver and wife taker relationships with the

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\(^{15}\) The arrival of Dominican de Guerreiro as Governor also meant that one side in an interdominational rivalry got the upper hand. The Dominicans had established themselves in the area from the beginning, but the above-mentioned leader of Larantuka, Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, was a Jesuit. In Jesuit circles, the Dominicans were accused of caring more about their own businesses than the souls of the local population. Figueiredo was murdered by his religious rival in 1667. Gunn, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

\(^{16}\) Hägerdal, op. cit., p. 59.


\(^{18}\) Hägerdal, 2006a, p. 60.

\(^{19}\) Fox, 1988, op. cit., p. 267.
kingdoms (cf. chapter 3). Through this strategy, some of the kings were tied into such strong relationships with the Portuguese that they had to help the Portuguese fight against other kings. The internal social structure of a kingdom was not affected. Only at the very top level, the kings established relations with the Portuguese. The king was the one who had to negotiate or deal with the “outside” powers, as he held political authority (all legitimized by the ritual authorities within the kingdom). He entered into military treaties to fight the Portuguese, or he would ally with them. Therefore, the Portuguese were never in frequent contact with the local population.

The Dutch reaction

When the Dutch learned about the Portuguese settlement at Lifau, and heard rumours of a Portuguese fort at Kupang, on the western tip of the island, they decided it was their turn to act. The VOC equipped large numbers of troops and took Kupang in 1653. The alleged new fortress of the Topasses consisted of merely one house occupied by four people. The Dutch nevertheless stayed on and built a castle which they called Fort Concordia. After a severe earthquake devastated their fortress on Solor, the Dutch decided to transfer their main garrison to Kupang. During the next few years, the VOC made treaties with a handful of Timorese rulers. These allies of the Dutch lived in villages near Fort Concordia and suffered frequent raids from both the Topasses and hostile Timorese. Of these rulers, the Atoni Sonba’i was alone of major significance. In 1656 the VOC sent a major force to Timor. This expedition was directed against a combined force of Timorese and Topasses led by António de Hornay and Mateus da Costa, who had assembled in the territory of Amarasi to the south of Kupang. The Dutch force was defeated, and for many years afterwards the Dutch managed only to maintain a precarious presence at Kupang, while the Topasses maintained their dominance in most of central and west Timor. A final effort to turn the Portuguese out of Larantuka was made after the Dutch conquest of Macassar in 1660. When this failed, the Portuguese were left in relative peace, and in 1661 a formal peace-treaty put an official end to hostilities.

A Portuguese – Topasses power struggle

The power struggle between the two families da Costa and Hornay was temporarily decided in 1673 by the death of Mateus da Costa. António de Hornay, son of Jan de Hornay, one of the Dutch commanders who deserted from Solor to Larantuka, acted as the uncrowned King of Timor for the next twenty years. While paying lip service to the Portuguese Crown, he refused to admit any governor nominated by the Viceroy. His acting on behalf of himself and his fellow Topasses was something the Portuguese government at Goa could do little about, since the Dutch presence at Malacca had the eastern part of Estado da Índia effectively cut off from Goa. A Goa-appointed Governor, António de Mesquita Pimentel, arrived in Timor in

21 Ibid, p. 574.
22 Daus, op. cit., p. 51.
24 Ibid.
26 Fox, 1982, op. cit., p. 29.
1695 ‘amidst scenes of great rejoicing at Larantuka and Lifau’. After murdering two of António de Hornay’s children and fleecing the population, Pimentel was expelled to Goa by the Topasses, opening the way for Domingos da Costa to take power. When Domingos da Costa gained control on Timor, his usurpation of power was considered a rebellion against the Portuguese crown. Almost the whole of Timor’s north coast was under control of Domingos da Costa by the end of the seventeenth century. The exception was Kupang and its immediate vicinity. In correspondence with the Dutch at Batavia he maintained the rights of the King of Portugal over Solor and Timor, and he cracked down on the export of sandalwood to the Dutch when it suited him. That his loyalty to the Portuguese king was not mere sentiment was proved by his donations to the Treasury at Goa, including a quantity of gold dust valued at 23,000 xerafines. The height of the Topasses’s power reached its zenith at the end of the seventeenth century. Trade with Timor was now controlled from Lifau, and it was open for all, except the Dutch. William Dampier, variously described as English navigator, hydrographer, writer, naturalist and pirate, visited Lifau in 1699. Below is an abridged excerpt of Dampier’s description of Lifau and its inhabitants, the Topasses:

There are in it (Lifau) about forty or fifty houses, and one church. The houses are mean and low ... The church also is very small. They have a small hovel by the sea side, where there are six small old iron guns standing on a decayed platform, in rotten carriages. The inhabitants of this town are chiefly a sort of Indians, of a copper colour, with black lank hair: they speak Portuguese, and are of the Romish religion.

They would be very angry, if a man should say they are not Portuguese; yet I saw but three white men here, two of which were padres. They have three or four small barks belonging to this place; with which they trade chiefly about the island with the natives, for wax, gold, and sandall-wood. Sometimes they go to Batavia and fetch European commodities, rice etc.

The Chinese trade hither from Macao ... about twenty sail of small vessels come from thence hither every year. They bring coarse rice, adulterated gold, tea, iron, and iron-tools, porcellane, silks etc. They take in exchange pure gold gathered in the mountains, bees-wax, sandall-wood, slaves etc. Sometimes also here comes a ship from Goa.

They boast very much of their strength here, and say they are able at any time to drive the Dutch away from the island, had they permission from the King of Portugal to do so. Yet really they are very weak, for they have but a few small arms, and but little powder. They have no fort, nor magazine of arms, nor does the Vice-Roy of Goa send them any now, for though they pretend to be under the King of Portugal, they are a sort of lawless people, and are under no Government. It was not long since the Vice Roy of Goa sent a ship hither, and a land-officer to remain here, but Captain More put him in irons, and sent him aboard the ship again; telling the Commander, that he had no occasion for any officers.

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27 Boxer 1948, op. cit., p. 182.
28 Fox, 1982, op. cit., p. 29.
29 Boxer 1948, op. cit., p. 182.
30 Xerafines were gold coins minted at Hormuz. They were used in all Indian, Persian and Arab ports, and as far east as Malacca. That the donation of 23,000 xerafines was a grand gesture can be understood, when compared with the sum of 1,000 xerafines that the ruler of Hormuz had to pay the Portuguese yearly after their conquest of Hormuz in 1515. Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira. Lisboa & Rio de Janeiro: Editorial Enciclopédia Limitada, 1945, Vol. 37, p. 90.
In 1700, the Viceroy of Goa appointed a 'Governor and Captain-General of the islands of Timor and Solor and other regions of the South', as the full title reads. As already mentioned, his name was António Coelho Guerreiro, and he would soon show that he had more lasting-power than his predecessors. He sailed for Timor, via Macau, in January 1702, with less than a hundred soldiers to enforce his authority upon the Topasses. The new Captain-General clashed with Domingos da Costa from the start. Guerreiro established a fortified beachhead at Lifau, and soon found himself blockaded at this fort by Domingos da Costa. The latter was never able to capture the place or to starve it out by siege, even though the garrison was forced to eat 'horses, dogs, hides, toasted bones, worms, and other filthy fauna, from doing which many of them sickened and died'. Guerreiro not only defied da Costa during a four-year blockade, but also ignored his orders from the Viceroy to avoid troubles with the Dutch. He seized a sloop belonging to a Batavian Chinese and then, in May 1704, sent an insulting note to the VOC recording this seizure addressed to 'Jan Van Alphen and the other rats of his nest'.

The Governor attempted to get the liurais (by the Portuguese named régulos) on his side by granting the rank of Colonel to twenty leading liurais, and lower commissioned ranks to lesser chiefs. This proved to be a wise policy, which came to last into the twentieth century. At the end of 1703 Guerreiro listed twenty-four Timorese kingdoms as subjects of the Governor and nine on the side of the Topasses. This tough operator managed to hold out until the end of 1704, when he abandoned the struggle and left Lifau 'in disgust and in disguise'. The earlier system of extraction of some form of tribute from the local rulers was more formalised in the period 1710-1714, and then turned into a codified system by Governor António Moniz de Macêdo in 1737. This system, named finta, along with the practice of granting military titles to local rulers were essential to the Topasses com Portuguese relations with the Timorese for many years to come. At the same time it also sowed the seeds for revolts among those who felt disadvantaged by the system.

And all the while there were uprisings, small and big. One of the major occurred during the first half of the 1720’s, in practice initiating almost 50 years of warfare between the Portuguese and the Timorese. In 1719, a great number of liurais met and joined forces in the “Pact of Kamenasse” with the purpose of expelling the Portuguese. The leaders of this revolt cemented their alliance through the ceremonial sacrifice of a black and white dog and the drinking of its blood mixed with their own. The rebellion attracted others to follow, and Francisco de Hornay became the leader. The Governor at the time, António de Albuquerque Coelho, managed to hold on to Lifau, but left the troubled territory Timor in 1725. Under his successor, António Moniz de Macêdo, the Portuguese launched an attack on Cailaco, considered to be the rebel headquarters. By the end of October 1726 the Portuguese massed their forces at the foot of Cailaco mountain, but after facing the defenders heroic resistance for forty days, followed by heavy rainfall, the Portuguese eventually had to withdraw.

The rebellion flared up again in 1729. The Portuguese Captain-General, Pedro de Mello, with less than fifty soldiers and a small number of volunteers from Macau. He was eventually besieged in Manatuto (on the north coast of what is now East Timor) for eighty-five days in late 1730/early 1731. With all provisions gone, the besieged troops charged out of the garrison. They overran the rebel’s trenches, and the enemy retreated with great losses.

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34 Ibid, p. 186.
35 Ibid.
37 Boxer 1948, op. cit., p. 186.
38 Gunn, op. cit., pp. 41-43.
39 Boxer, op. cit., p. 194.
Returning to Lifau, de Mello found the town under siege by Timorese and Topasse forces. The situation was so grave, that the Portuguese contemplated abandoning the place, setting it on fire and leaving for a healthier place. Only the unexpected arrival of a new governor and fresh troops and replenishments from Macau changed these plans. After first sailing to Dili for negotiations with local rebel chiefs, the new governor, Pedro de Rigo Barreto da Gama eventually managed to sign a peace pact with the rebel chief at Manatuto on March 16, 1732. Following this, more than forty kingdoms agreed to pay the finta and to accept the Portuguese as – at least formal – rulers.

As usual, the peace was not for long, and the power struggle between Goa, represented by a succession of governors, and the Topasses, led by the da Costa and Hornay families, continued. However, in 1749 a turning point was reached in the perennial troubles of Timor, and the strength of the Topasses was greatly diminished. In that year, the Topasses assembled a major force for an attack on Kupang. In a battle at Penfui, near Kupang, the Topasses were completely routed by a small Dutch force strengthened by Savunese, Rotinese, Timorese and Solorese. The Timorese allies, according to a contemporary Dutch account, carried off thousands of heads of the defeated Topasses after the battle.

Following this victory, the Dutch launched a number of punitive expeditions against various local kingdoms. As a result, many Timorese rulers switched allegiance to the Dutch. This culminated in a contract, concluded on 9 June 1756, between the VOC and over a dozen Timorese rulers, together with the ‘Great Prince of the Belonese Kingdom and Souverain King of Wywikio Wehale’, who represented twenty-seven lesser domains within his realm.

In 1761 the official Portuguese Governor of Timor was forced to seek refuge in Kupang. The VOC representative in Kupang then journeyed to Lifau in the hope of concluding a three-sided treaty between the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Topasses. However, he was killed in Lifau, ending all hopes of a treaty. Finally, in 1769, the Portuguese Governor, António José Telles de Menezes, as usual under siege by the Topasses, abandoned Lifau for good and moved the entire Portuguese garrison. At the time of this exodus there were 1,200 men, women and children inside the fortifications on the waterfront at Lifau. When a couple of ships visited the port, the governor took the historic decision to move the site of government to Dili, a place already known both for its unhealthy swamps and sheltered bay. The place was also located on an open plain, making it quite easy to defend with artillery. On 11 August 1769 they boarded the ships and left Lifau. After staying for some time at Batugadé (now on the border between West and East Timor) they reached Dili, 200 kilometres away from the troublesome Hornays and da Costas, on 10 October 1769. Thus, Timor became divided into three spheres, with the Dutch at the far west of the island, the Portuguese in the east, and the Topasses between them.

Dili – rebellions

While Dili proved to be somewhat more peaceful than Lifau, all was not well in the new Portuguese capital of Timor. As in Lifau there were constant rebellions, and the Portuguese were largely confined to their settlement at Dili.

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40 Gunn, op. cit., pp. 41-44.
44 Fox, 1982, op. cit., p. 31.
A number of Governors followed in a short period of time. Although acting as brutally as their limited powers allowed them, none of them were able to do much about the situation, until Lourenço de Brito Correia, with orders from Goa to act in a more civilised manner in 1782 managed to pacify the province, with the exception of the kingdom of Luca.\textsuperscript{45}

Commencing in 1781, and continuing through the rule of governor José Ângelo de Almeida Soares (1782-1785) the revolt in Luca, also called the Guerra do loucas or war of the doidas or mad, was led by a so-called prophet or manioco (lit.mad) who deemed himself invulnerable. As described by de Castro, leading a “rude, ignorant and superstitious people” he marched on Viqueque. This rebellion was only successfully crushed by Governor João Baptista Vieira Godinho (1785-88).\textsuperscript{46}

The Governor João Baptista Godinho, arriving in 1785, went directly to Solor where he met Pedro de Hornay, leader of the Topasses. Godinho bestowed the title of Tenente-General upon Hornay. This gesture was accepted by Hornay, who signed a treaty of obedience to the king of Portugal.\textsuperscript{47} Thus the Portuguese enclave of Oecusse was created out of the territory on Timor’s north coast that surrounded the town of Lifau. Pedro de Hornay immediately began fighting against the Dutch, and at this time Luca also fell under Portuguese control.\textsuperscript{48} After Godinho’s return to Goa in 1788, there were new uprisings against the Portuguese. One of them was instigated by a Portuguese priest, Francisco Luís da Cunha, who apparently harboured a lot of ill feelings for the Governor in Dili. Finally, in 1790 both the Governor and the priest were expelled from Timor by orders from Goa.

The next decade was no less rebellious than the previous; in Dili it culminated in 1799 with a fire which destroyed much of the administration buildings and storages. None less than the Governor was suspected of being responsible for this fire (he had earlier been convicted of the embezzlement of municipal funds of Goa, the reason for him being sent to Timor in the first place). Portuguese sources about their early settlement in Timor are limited because most of the documents were lost in this fire. Even the year of the fire is disputed, given as 1790 by Pimenta da Castro, and 1796 by Luna de Oliveira, writing in 1944 and 1950 respectively.\textsuperscript{49}

The Dutch isolate Portuguese Timor

So far in the narrative the Dutch have gained only a precarious toehold on the westernmost tip of the Timor Island. William Dampier visited not only Lifau in 1699; he wrote of the Dutch in Kupang that ‘they have only as much ground as they can keep within reach of their guns ...’.\textsuperscript{50} In other parts of the Archipelago, the Dutch presence was of a radically different nature.

When the Dutch came to Java in the early seventeenth century, the strongest power there was the Moslem kingdom Mataram. Mataram had taken over from Demak, which conquered Majapahit in 1527. Under Sultan Agung, its third king (1613-1646), Mataram unified central Java, East Java and Madura plus a part of west Java, and exercised influence in parts of Sumatra and Kalimantan (Borneo). As Mataram extended its sway to include the coastal regions of Java, the boats of these regions were destroyed. Mataram was an inland, centralised, agrarian kraton, and the navigation of the coastal areas was seen as a threat

\textsuperscript{45} Esteves Felgas, op. cit., p. 243.
\textsuperscript{46} Gunn, op. cit., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{47} Esteves Felgas, op. cit., p. 243.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, p. 244.
against the attempt to uphold the dominance of the inland over the maritime kratons. Mataram left open the port of Japara, through which Mataram’s rice surplus was exported.\(^{51}\)

Sultan Agung invited the VOC to participate in an attack on Bantam, Mataram’s chief rival for power on Java. The Dutch refused, and Mataram tried unsuccessfully to oust them from Batavia in 1628 and 1629. Sultan Agung cut off their rice-supplies via Japara, and he also turned to the Portuguese in Malacca in the hope that the combined forces of Mataram and Portugal would be able to throw the Dutch out of Java. This led to the Dutch seizure of Malacca in 1641. The first in a series of agreements between Mataram and the VOC was signed in 1646, the year in which Sultan Agung died. This was the beginning of the decline of Mataram. The agreement provided for an end to the fighting between the Dutch and Mataram, co-operation in trade and navigation (with certain limitations imposed upon Mataram), and a provision that the ships of the VOC were to take Javanese Moslems to Mecca for their pilgrimage.\(^{52}\) The conditions established by the Dutch also reduced Mataram’s territory and at the same time reduced the Sultan to a junior position in a ‘father and son’ relation vis-à-vis the Dutch.\(^{53}\)

Mataram lost her connection with the maritime trade, and Bantam redirected its trade towards Dutch Batavia.\(^{54}\) Bantam’s trade was dominated by Chinese merchants, and many of them moved to Batavia, where they were allowed by the Dutch to function as middlemen in the trade of the archipelago.\(^{55}\) The Dutch defeated Bantam in 1682, and closed its markets to other Europeans.\(^{56}\) The Dutch had now achieved supremacy over the Malacca Straits, and before the turn of the century the VOC had established its monopolistic position in the archipelago.\(^{57}\) The Portuguese in Timor were now isolated in their new capital of Dili, surrounded by a hostile local population and to a large extent deprived of the formerly so lucrative sandalwood trade.

**England – the new power on the scene**

Just as the Netherlands rose to prominence and wrestled away most of Estado da Índia during the period of Portugal’s union with Spain, England, the Netherlands strongest competitor, took the step from accumulation and distribution of mercantile wealth to a comprehensive capitalist transformation during the period of Dutch expansion.\(^{58}\) At the same time a series of inventions established the predominance of production by machine. The main difference between England and the Netherlands was that in England the first factory masters found a steady supply of labourers, resulting from the enclosure of the land and the growing size of cottage families working in the putting-out system.

As capitalism grew, new areas were needed to supply raw-materials and manpower, and this led to a total rearrangement of the organisation of production. The industrial revolution in England, in combination with growing trade with China, made it possible for England to become the major power in India. The demand for cotton in England and the British cotton

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\(^{52}\) Ibid, p. 30.


\(^{57}\) de Iongh, op. cit., p. 104.

\(^{58}\) Wolf, op. cit., p. 120.
mills in India resulted in millions of acres in India being turned into cotton-growing areas. The impact was similar on both the slave-plantations of America and in peasant production in Egypt. The colonies were becoming an increasingly important market for British goods, and capital investments brought back dividends from all parts of the world. The industrialising areas were transformed, as were the areas which supplied raw materials. Merely extracting surplus out of local farmers, even in an efficient manner, was now a thing of the past.

Companies who had earlier bought and sold products extracted from the colonised peoples by the landowners were now becoming directly involved in the productive processes in the colonies, especially in manufacture. From its strong base in India the British were able to interfere in the affairs of Southeast Asia, which was until then a virtually uncontested area of Dutch dominance. When English ships, as mentioned earlier, intercepted Portuguese ships carrying sandalwood out of Timor in the early nineteenth century, they did so out of a formally friendly position. During the events on Timor reviewed above, from the first settlement at Lifau to the later establishment at Dili, Portugal, freed from Spain, had fallen into a relationship of dependency with England in order to preserve its security against both the Spaniards and the Dutch. When a new bonanza appeared in Brazil with the discovery of gold (1690s) and diamonds (1720s), it was used no better than the Asian bonanza to transform the domestic economy. Instead, economic dependency on England followed from the Methuen Treaty in 1703, which gave Portugal’s wines free entry to British markets at the heavy cost of subjecting its textile and other manufacturing industries to crushing English competition.

The effects of Methuen were immediate. In one decade Portuguese imports from England more than doubled, but exports increased by only forty per cent. The treaty wiped out the infant textile industry and led to a fivefold increase in Portuguese wine production from 1670 to 1710. This absorbed most of the available Portuguese capital and an increasing amount of Portuguese labour. In addition to negative impacts on manufactured goods, the trade itself was largely controlled by British interests which took most of the profits. In 1760 Duc de Choiseul, France’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that Portugal ‘must be regarded as an English colony’.

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63 The Methuen Treaty was the culmination of a long series of treaties going all the way back to the fourteenth century. In 1373 Edward II of England signed a treaty of mutual military support with Portugal; this treaty was invoked by Britain in 1943 when seeking bases in the Azores during World War II. In 1386 the two countries entered into a perpetual military alliance – the Treaty of Windsor – against all powers except the Pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, and John of Gaunt, ‘King of Castle.’ The alliance lapsed during the years in which Portugal was part of the Spanish Empire, 1578-1640, but when Portugal regained its independence it was revived in the form of a Treaty of Peace and Commerce signed in 1642 by Charles I of England and John IV of Portugal. A Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza, was married in 1661 to Charles II. Tangier and Bombay formed part of her dowry. In that year a Treaty of Alliance was signed. This has remained the basis of Anglo-Portuguese relations until modern times. The original treaty from 1373 was invoked by Britain in 1943 when seeking bases in the Azores during World War II (R. P. Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961.* London: Asia Publishing House, 1963, p. 157.)
The Marquess de Pombal, chief minister and virtual dictator during the reign (1750-1777) of José I, sought to shake up the economy and society through drastic assertion of the royal power. Reforms took place across all fields, including finances, the army, the educational system, agriculture, commerce, manufacturing industries, and foreign relations. This modernising minister employed methods against the nobility, church, and other groups with vested interests in the old order which tended to be harsher than those used by other ‘enlightened despots’ of eighteenth century Europe. Pombal resigned after the king’s death, and Portugal abandoned the modernising attempts, returning to being a country that was dependent on Brazil economically and on England politically.

Their Dutch competitors, in their turn had in 1662 entered into an alliance with France against England, which led to the loss of New Netherlands in America and Cape Coast Castle on the Gold Coast of Africa.

A French invasion of the Netherlands in 1667 led to an alliance between the Netherlands, England and Sweden, and France was forced to withdraw.65 In 1672, however, the Dutch again found themselves in separate wars with England and France. Nearly all of Holland was conquered by the French, but the Dutch state somehow managed to survive, and the war ended with a peace treaty in 1678. In the American War of Independence the Dutch backed the Americans, leading to a naval war with England, which the Dutch lost. In the ensuing peace treaty the British achieved free entry into the trade with the Moluccas.

The Revolutionary Wars of Napoleon started in 1792. In these wars, a number of different coalitions of European states fought against France for seventeen years. The Dutch entered the war against France in 1793, but were forced into a peace settlement and alliance with France in 1795, in which year the Netherlands became the Batavian Republic under a French protectorate.66 Thus, while it seemed that the Dutch by the year 1700 had established a firm monopoly in South East Asia, this year also marked the beginning of an outdrawn downfall. Initially, the combination of the system where the VOC exploited the Javanese farmers via their kings, and the Dutch monopoly of the spice trade with the Moluccas yielded enormous quantities of produce to the Dutch, produce which was sold at great profit in Asia and Europe. Nevertheless, on 1 January 1800, the VOC was officially dissolved and declared bankrupt.67

There were many reasons for the downfall of the VOC. One was that Dutch domination of Malayan and Indonesian waters was seriously undermined by smuggling and piracy. There was also a decline in maritime strength vis-à-vis other European countries. Dutch ships were able to fire broadsides at the rate of three to one compared to English and French ships in the 1670s, while the opposite was the case a hundred years later. Dutch navigational skills had also fallen behind those of their competitors. Boxer blames this on the bureaucratic routine which insisted that all ships follow fixed courses. The English, learning from the Dutch and then improving on this knowledge, began to shorten the voyages.68

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65 Ibid, p. 79.
67 Bastin and Banda, op. cit., p. 22.
Further, the gross exploitation of the Javanese farmers undermined the long-term possibilities of creating a market in Java for European or Indian goods brought there by the Dutch. Instead, the population grew their own cotton and made their own clothes, and traded with English and Portuguese smugglers.\textsuperscript{69} In the Netherlands itself, the ruling merchant oligarchy in Amsterdam had turned into a rentier oligarchy, not interested in investments in trade. Instead they invested in houses, lands and money-lending institutions.\textsuperscript{70} A lot of this money was invested abroad, especially in England.\textsuperscript{71} Taken together, all these factors led to a ‘growing commercial and maritime impotence of the Netherlands during the eighteenth century’,\textsuperscript{72} and ultimately to the downfall of the once so mighty VOC.

Thus by the time of the dissolution of the VOC, the situation was as follows. In East Timor, an economically weak but moderately stabilized colonial apparatus managed to co-opt a weakened Topass community. In West Timor a fragile outpost of a crumbling colonial empire desperately tried to keep self-willed local principalities within their alliance system. This rough division of power lasted henceforth, and was cemented through Dutch Portuguese diplomatic agreements in 1851, 1859 and 1916.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{69} Hall, op. cit., p. 354.
\textsuperscript{70} Boxer 1988a, op. cit., pp. 34-35
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, p.123.
\textsuperscript{72} Bastin and Banda, op. cit., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{73} Hans Hägerdal, ‘Colonial rivalry and the partition of Timor’ in \textit{IIAS Newsletter} #40, Leiden & Amsterdam: The International Institute for Asian Studies, 2006b, p. 16.
6 Portuguese colonialism ca. 1800-1915

Portugal dependent of England

In the preceding chapter I described how the eastern part of Timor was for all practical purposes separated from the rest of the Archipelago because of the contest between the Portuguese and the Dutch. This isolation was accentuated by the differences in the two colonial powers’ ways of running affairs in their respective foreign possessions, and it was formalised by boundary agreements which to a large degree resulted from events in both Europe and Africa. The weakest of all colonial powers, Portugal found itself protected, but also bullied, by the mightiest power on earth, England.

Napoleon had conquered Portugal in November 1807, causing the royal family to flee to Brazil. In 1808, British forces entered Portugal. After three years of struggle, under British rather than Portuguese direction, the French were expelled. Following this, England provided protection to the Portuguese Crown and the Royal Navy defended Portuguese overseas colonies. Portugal was forced to abandon mercantilism and consequently lost most of the commerce in her empire. Within ten years, the British dominated Brazilian trade and commerce. In 1815, King João VI, instead of returning to Portugal, raised Brazil to the status of a co-equal kingdom, with the centre in Brazil. The result was that Portugal was in effect governed in Lisbon by a Council of Regency, in turn presided over by an Englishman.1 In 1822 Brazil declared itself independent.

In Timor – poverty and uprisings

In Portuguese Timor, the early nineteenth century saw a series of Governors appointed to Portuguese Timor. Various kingdoms were rebelling at different times, while others simply refused to pay taxes.2 During the first decade of the new century, the export of sandalwood also began to go down as a result of the native wars and the capturing of trading ships by the British, who were now beginning to appear on the scene. Another reason for the decrease in export was competition from sandalwood, brought from the Malabar Coast.3

It was however the Timorese uprisings, which presented the greatest problem for the Portuguese, and they appeared with increasing frequency. It seems quite likely that if the great number of local kingdoms had co-operated in a concerted effort, the Portuguese would have been expelled from the island at some time in the 19th century.

The kingdom of Luka was at war for 28 years from 1779 to 1807. In 1812, Lakluta and Maubara revolted, while Laleia, Beimau, Dote, Alas, Kova and Sealare refused to pay taxes to the colonial government.4 While the Portuguese were hard put to win enduring allies from

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among the Timorese they were successful in co-opting a (mostly) loyal cadre of mercenary forces. From the time of the founding of Lifau, these forces comprised three elements; the *moradores*, bands of lightly armed forces of loyal *reinos*, the Bidau and the Sica. The Bidau and Sica originated respectively from Solor and Sica on Flores. They were drawn from Christianised elements who had also intermarried with Goans and Africans, the latter most probably from the colony’s slave population. The Bidau, as a cohesive group, resided over long time in the suburb of that name in Dili, speaking a distinctive Portuguese creole. Equally, a company of *moradores* based in Manatuto enabled the Portuguese to maintain control over this important centre for a long period.5

Coffee had been introduced to Timor by the Dutch in Maubara, a Dutch enclave to the west of Dili.6 Probably as a result of the diminishing export of sandalwood, and perhaps inspired by the Dutch, the Governor José Pinto Alcoforado e Sousa introduced coffee in Portuguese Timor in 1815. He also made attempts to start growing sugarcane and cotton. Coffee did not, however, attain major importance for the Timorese economy for a number of years to come. Crawfurd, writing in 1820, emphasizes the importance of three key trade items from Timor in the archipelago-wide trade; sandalwood, beeswax and whale-fishery. Between ten and twelve English ships would put in annually in Dili to re-provision.7 A number of visitors to Dili witnessed and recorded the poverty and lack of development during most of the nineteenth century. D. H. Kolff, commander of the Dutch brig Dourga, arrived in Dili in May 1825. Kolff saluted the fort with thirteen guns, which was returned with eleven. Kolff, apparently a stern military man, was upset by this carelessness. A lieutenant was sent ashore to inform the governor of the arrival. The governor, enjoying his siesta, let the Dutch lieutenant walk in front of the house from noon until about three o’clock, upsetting the Dutch commander even further. I let Kolff give the reader an (abridged) impression of Dili in 1825:

The governor of the Portuguese possessions ... pays himself and the other officials out of the revenue derived from the trade. They are all engaged in mercantile pursuits. Their pay ... is extremely small, the officers receiving only eleven guilders and the soldiers three guilders per month. Their dwellings are miserable, dirty, and poor. Slaves were frequently offered to me on sale, the Commandant, among others, wishing me to purchase two children of seven or eight years, who were loaded with heavy irons.

These unfortunate people are kidnapped in the interior and brought to Dili for sale, the Governor readily providing the vendor with certificates under his hand and seal, authorising him to dispose of the captives as he may think fit. In addition to the slave trade from which the government officers appeared to derive the greater part of their income, a commerce is also carried on in wax and sandal-wood, which the natives are forced to deliver up at a small, and almost nominal price. The trade is entirely engrossed by the governor and officials, no other individual being permitted to embark in commerce.

This, with other abuses, caused so much discontent, that many of the inhabitants of Dili, both natives and Chinese, expressed to me their strong desire to be freed from the hateful yoke of the Portuguese. Scarcely had we anchored in the roads, when several came on board the brig and gave vent to their joy, supposing that we had come to take possession of the place.

The population appeared to be numerous, but no signs of prosperity were visible. The dwelling-houses, small, dirty and ruinous, and built without order and symmetry, were scattered irregularly over the town. A large plain extended to the eastward of the town, on which appeared an exceedingly high

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6 Gervase Clarence-Smith, ‘Planters and Smallholders in Portuguese Timor in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.’ In Indonesia Circle, No. 57, 1992, p. 15.
7 Gunn, op. cit., p. 54.
gallows. The land ... would produce abundantly were the indolent Portuguese
to turn their attention to agriculture, or to encourage the natives to do so; but
they prefer to see the innocent natives carried off from their peaceful homes
in the hills, that they may profit by their sale, to allowing them to better their
condition by their labour and agricultural skill.\footnote{D. H. Jun. Kolff, \textit{Voyages of the Dutch Brig of War Dourgaa, through the Southern and Little-known Parts of
the Moluccan Archipelago, and along the Previously Unknown Southern Coast of New Guinea, performed
During the Years 1825 & 1826.} London: James Madden & Co., 1840, pp. 33-38.}

Dili was for all practical purposes cut off from Goa, the formal capital of the remnants of
Estado da Índia. Macau provided the only real support, and in 1844 became directly
responsible for Portuguese Timor.\footnote{Administrative confusion characterised the nineteenth century. In 1851 Timor’s dependency was changed back
to Lisbon, in 1856 to Goa, in 1863 back to Lisbon again. Macau was once more entrusted with the Timorese
administration in 1866. In 1897 responsibility over Timor ended up in Lisbon. Stephen R. Ranck, \textit{Recent Rural-
Urban Migration to Dili, Portuguese Timor: A Focus on the Use of Households, Kinship and Social Networks by
Timorese Migrants.} Macquarie University, Australia: Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Geography,
School of Earth Sciences, 1977, p. 51.} Profits derived from the sandalwood trade were very low
and supply ships were virtually non-existent by the middle of the century.\footnote{Ibid.}

\section*{Border agreement and attempts at administrative control – and still more revolts}

Lopes de Lima arrived as the new Governor in 1850, endowed also with the authority to settle
the boundary dispute with the Dutch. Lacking funds to run the colony, de Lima contacted the
government of Batavia in 1854 and offered them sovereignty over Flores against payment of
200,000 guilders and recognition of East Timor and the enclave of Oecusse (the area
surrounding Lifau) as perpetual Portuguese territory. The Dutch paid the Portuguese governor
a first installment of 80,000 guilders and were given the right to provisionally administer the
islands.\footnote{Ibid.} Lisbon protested against the occupation of Flores, but the Portuguese government
was apparently not able to pay back the 80,000 guilders, which Lopes de Lima already had
spent on municipal salaries and other expenditures. The treaty was officially ratified in
1859.\footnote{Ibid.}

One year after the border agreement with the Dutch, East Timor was divided into ten
districts by Governor Afonso de Castro (Lopes de Lima had been called back to Lisbon in
disgrace). The leaders of the local kingdoms, the liurais, were not consulted at all, but they
were soon confronted with new forms of administrative interference. Portuguese officials
were appointed to inspect the loyalty of the kingdoms, and military district commanders were
appointed for collecting taxes.

Faced with the rapid economic development of most of Europe, Portugal tried to improve
its economic position by a more systematic exploitation of its colonies than had previously
been the case. For Timor this resulted in an expansion of cultivation for export. Villagers were
persuaded to increase their yield, to diversify into new crops such as cocoa, copra, rubber, and
plantations to grow coffee were introduced. Forced labour was used to develop the
infrastructure, to cultivate crops and extend their trading system. The success of these policies
required more widespread political control than previously. Yet the extension of Portuguese
authority encountered a barrier. Afonso de Castro clearly perceived the background of
Timorese resilience to the invaders:

\footnote{Ibid.}
Marital exchange is our government’s major enemy because it produces … an infinity of kin relations which comprises leagues of reaction against the orders of the governors and the dominion of our laws. There has not been a single rebellion against the Portuguese flag which is not based in the alliances which result from marital exchange.\(^{13}\)

Portuguese policies during the second half of the century thus had two objectives: to undermine the indigenous kinship system and to create a basis for the systematic exploitation of its colony.\(^{14}\) By these measures, the Portuguese hoped that, finally, they would be able to exercise more effective control over their colony. In the coming years, however, it soon became apparent that the impact on the subsistence sector of the economic policies required for cash-crop cultivation was relatively minor, as were the social effects of these policies, with the sole exception being the regular demands for forced labour.\(^{15}\) Furthermore, although the kingdoms had been formally abolished, the ideologies legitimizing the traditional political hierarchy and the rituals of exchange were perpetuated; suco heads, for example, had to ensure that they were supported by the liurai and his retinue. Consequently, two political systems, the colonial and the indigenous, co-existed in, at best, a rather uneasy truce.\(^{16}\) Whilst the former was sanctioned through coercion and the use of force, the latter was underpinned by a powerful set of cultural traditions.\(^{17}\)

Competition from the Malabar Coast was not the only external factor that affected the sandalwood trade. During the end of the 1830s the export of sandalwood from Timor diminished because of the Opium War (1839-42). The Taipeng revolution in 1851-64 also had a negative impact. In the middle of the nineteenth century the English also began to compete successfully with exports of sandalwood from New Caledonia and from the southern and western parts of Australia. Australian sandalwood was considered to be of lower quality than the Timorese; it was sold in Singapore and China at one fifth the price of Timorese sandalwood.\(^{18}\)

Governor Afonso de Castro, alarmed by the low revenues from the sandalwood trade, introduced a system of forced cultivation of coffee. The liurais were ordered to grow coffee and to yield twenty per cent of the harvest to the authorities. They were also held responsible for making their people cultivate coffee and for delivering a labour force to state-owned plantations.\(^{19}\) The Portuguese interference with the Timorese kingdoms led, as could be expected, to numerous revolts. In 1851, Faturo and Sarau initiated a great revolt which resulted in their destruction and total decimation. Many other revolts occurred in this period following the transition from the cycle of sandalwood to coffee. In 1861 the kingdoms of Lacló and Ulmera revolted and were joined by Manatuto and Veimasse. Retribution was harsh, with many Timorese settlements razed to the ground, but the revolts did not end. Afonso de Castro himself commented: ‘The revolts in Timor succeeded each other in a way

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\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Ibid, p. 31.


\(^{17}\) Taylor, op. cit., p. 32


\(^{19}\) Lawson, op. cit., p. 8.
PART I. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

that we can say that a situation of revolt is the normal situation and a situation of order is the exception’.20

In spite of all the fighting de Castro’s endeavours were soon successful. The quality of Portuguese Timor’s Arabica coffee was high, and it fetched a good price. De Castro also benefited from rising world prices and after 1862 the share of coffee in the total value of exports accounted consistently to more than 50 per cent.21

During the governorship of Afonso de Castro the first school for Timorese, providing primary education for the first and second grades, was set up. The aim was to educate the children of the principal indigenous chiefs. De Castro saw it as important ‘that the Timorese rulers know about our civilisation, which is the only way of dealing with the customs of such barbaric peoples’ .22

The English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace arrived in Dili on 12 January 1861. Wallace wrote a book about his travels with the title *Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-Utan and the Bird of Paradise. A Narrative of Travel, with Studies of Man and Nature.*23 His view of Dili is not much different from the one presented by Kolff. The following is an abridged sample of Wallace’s description:

Delli is a most miserable place ... . The houses are all of mud and thatch; the fort is only a mud enclosure; and the custom-house and church are built of the same mean materials, with no attempt at decoration or even neatness. The Governor’s house is a low whitewashed bungalow. Yet officials in black and white European costume, and officers in gorgeous uniforms, abound in a degree quite disproportionate to the size or appearance of the place. The town is surrounded by swamps and mud flats. [The place] is very unhealthy, a single night often gives a fever to new-comers. If a tolerable road were made, the hills would be only an hour’s ride from the town. Potatoes and wheat are grown in abundance at from 3,000 to 3,500 feet elevation. The fact that the natives have (quite of their own accord) taken to cultivating such foreign articles as wheat and potatoes, which they bring in small quantities on the backs of ponies by the most horrible mountain tracks, and sell very cheaply by the seaside, sufficiently indicates what might be done, if good roads were made, and if the people were taught, encouraged and protected.

The Timorese fight continually among themselves, and take every opportunity of kidnapping unprotected people of other tribes for slaves; but Europeans may pass anywhere through the country in safety. The people retain their independence in a great measure, and both dislike and despise their would-be rulers, whether Portuguese or Dutch. The Portuguese government in Timor is a most miserable one. Nobody seems to care the least about the improvement of the country. There is not a solitary European resident anywhere in the interior. All the Government officials oppress and rob the natives as much as they can ... . Morality at Delli is at as low an ebb as in the far interior of Brazil ... 24


23 Alfred Russel Wallace (1823 - 1913) is most famous for having independently conceived of the theory of evolution through natural selection. He jointly published the theory with Charles Darwin in 1858.

The revolts continued under da Castro’s successors. In June 1863 the kingdom of Laga revolted and was subsequently burned down by colonial troops. Fatumasse revolted, and was subsequently burned down by colonial troops. In 1865 the troops of governor Teixeira da Silva were attacked by Timorese Cotubada fighters and the kingdoms of Cová, Balibó and Saniri were united and then revolted. In response, the coastal areas were bombarded by a corvette sent from Macau. While it is possible that Kolff’s and Wallace’s descriptions were products of Dutch and British prejudices towards the Portuguese, their impressions of Dili were confirmed by a report from this corvette, as presented in The Official Bulletin of the Province of Macau and Timor No. 26, 27 June 1870:

Dilly!...A borough composed of cubatas (cottages the African Negroes make of leafy branches), thatched houses, tents, huts or straw shacks, all of which can be called less than houses, absolutely inferior to any village of which we are acquainted in Portugal. It seems that the word misery was expressively invented to define Timor.

Still another naturalist, Scotsman Henry Forbes, visited Dili twice in the early 1880s. When sailing to Dili from Batavia in May 1881, he had as travelling companions the new Portuguese Governor and his family. Upon returning to Dili from a trip to Amboina in the Spice Islands in February 1882 Forbes again encountered the Governor, Major da Franca, and his family. Forbes was saddened to see:

... their forcibly emaciated countenances, which proclaimed more forcibly than words, the pestiferous nature of the climate. One of their numbers – the youngest – already slept under the shade of the Santa Cruz (the Dili cemetery, G. J.); in all of them the notorious Dilly fever had killed down the cheerful vivacity, buoyancy of spirit and bright eye with which they had stepped ashore in the month of May.

Forbes provides a vivid picture of the population mingling in the streets of Dili:

The streets of Dilly itself offer to the traveller a fine studio for ethnological investigation, for a curious mixture of nationalities other than European rub shoulders with each other in the town’s narrow limits. At a single glance one sees that this crowd has few elements in common with that seen at Cupang in the west. Tall, erect indigenous mingle with Negroes from the Portuguese possession of Mozambique and the coasts of Africa, most of them here in the capacity of soldiers or condemned criminals; tall, lithe East Indians from Goa and its neighbourhood; Chinese and Bugis of Macassar, with Arabs and Malays and natives from Alor, Savu, Roti, and Flores; besides a crowd in whose veins the degree of co-minglement of blood of all these races would defy the acutest computation.

The Arabs referred to by Forbes above were descendants of traders from the Hadramaut, a region in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, who since medieval times had travelled with the monsoons throughout the Indian Ocean. They had established a trading presence on

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26 Ranck, op. cit., p. 82.
28 Ibid, p. 418.
Timor in the 19th century. Numbering only a few hundred, they formed a small Muslim minority on the Portuguese part of the island.29

Forbes also gives an account of how he travelled in the interior of Timor, totally unmolested by the otherwise warlike population. He had as an escort a Hindu officer (probably from Goa) acting as guide, interpreter and adviser. To this Hindu assistant was added an official of the first kingdom through which they passed. This official was relieved by an officer from the next kingdom upon reaching the border. The officer was responsible for every item in the luggage and of Wallace’s very person, until relieved by the official from the bordering kingdom. Forbes writes that ‘the whole of East Timor is appointed out under certain chiefs called Leoreis (liurais), each of whom is independent and absolute in his own kingdom. At present there are forty-seven of these. Nearly every kingdom has its own dialect’.

The Scramble for Africa

At this point it is necessary to make still one more detour to Europe, where the new capitalistic and aggressive nation-states had begun to show interest in parts of the world which had hitherto been reserved for only a few nations. Portugal was one of these few, and was also the nation which unwittingly sat the metaphorical match to the fuse which led to the explosive outburst of European colonialism of a capitalistic nature. During the proceedings, Portugal was relegated to the second division of usurpers.

Leopold II, king of the newly independent Belgium, summoned a conference to Brussels in September 1876. At this conference the International Association for the Exploration and Civilisation of Central Africa was organised. Two years later Leopold formed the Committee for the Study of the Upper Congo and employed Henry Morton Stanley, who had just returned from exploring the Congo River. Soon after Stanley had set out secretly for Africa on behalf of Leopold, the French government sent Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza into the Gabon area.

The French established themselves on the Ivory Coast, in Guinea, and in Dahomey, and they expanded eastward from Senegal along the Niger toward Lake Chad. In 1881 France proclaimed a protectorate over Tunisia. The British expanded up the Gambia River and into the interiors of Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria. In 1882 they occupied Egypt. Otto von Bismarck decided in 1884 to occupy Togo, the Cameroons, and South West Africa.

Alarmed by these European intrusions into Africa, Portugal sought the aid of Britain. The two nations signed a treaty on 26 February 1884, defining Portuguese territory at the mouth of the Congo and providing for the two to regulate navigation of the river. This defiance of the interest of other nations led to wide protests. Fourteen countries, including the United States, met in Berlin on 15 November 1884, to discuss the Anglo-Portuguese treaty. That treaty, however, was no longer an issue, as the British government had refused to have it ratified by Parliament. On 26 February 1885 the conference agreed to a treaty, providing for international control of the navigation on the Congo. It also established the principle that occupation of African territory must be effective to be legal. The clause of effective control, led to the so-called scramble for Africa.31 Africa at the time was, in the words of Gérard Prunier ‘a continent apart’:

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31 Clarence-Smith, op. cit., p. 83.
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It had no nation-states, and no empire … It was a continent of clans, of segmentary tribes and of a few sacred monarchies … Boundaries did exist, but not in the European sense. They were linguistic, cultural, military, or commercial, and they tended to crisscross and overlap, without the neat delineations so much beloved by Western statesmen … colonial logic played havoc with that delicate cobweb of relationships. New borders were drawn not so much in violation of pre-existing ones but according to a different logic.  

Portugal was now forced to exercise systematic control or otherwise risk losing its territories to stronger contenders. In 1886 the Portuguese tried to establish a territory stretching from coast to coast, from Luanda to Mozambique, but this was a direct threat to Cecil Rhode’s vision of a British territory from Cape Town to Cairo, and Portugal was forced to give way. In 1890, Great Britain issued an ultimatum wherein Portugal was forced to withdraw or risk a military intervention. As a result, a treaty was signed which limited Portuguese jurisdiction to approximately the borders of Angola and Mozambique. Portugal tried to control their territories by military means, but for all practical purposes it was not until the end of W.W.I that Angola and Mozambique were effectively brought under Portuguese control.

The scramble for Africa resulted in a new kind of exploitation, which had as a prerequisite that the colonising power could absorb a hitherto unimaginable amount of raw materials of various kinds. Moreover, a great part of these raw materials were re-exported to the colonised territories in the form of factory-produced manufactures. This was possible only for the most industrialised countries of Europe. The three most technically-advanced countries of Europe, England, France and Germany, together acquired almost exactly eighty per cent of the African territories which became colonised during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The relative diminishing of Portugal’s power on the African continent - and especially so the humiliating treatment at the hands of the British - combined with the country’s failure to keep pace with the industrialisation on home turf with their European competitors, led to the emergence of the military as an important interest group and colonial conquests became synonymous with the restoration of national prestige.

Portugal was declared bankrupt in the 1890s. King Carlos I, in order to save the monarchy, installed a government led by J. Franco in 1906 and endowed Franco with dictatorial powers. Carlos I was murdered in 1908, and the dictatorship fell with the king, resulting, once more, in a politically confused situation. In October 1910 an army insurrection overthrew the last king of Portugal, Manuel II, and proclaimed a republic. This Portuguese Republic of 1910-1926 is ill-famed for its instability. During this period there were forty-eight governments, seven presidents, and at least twenty-five attempts at coups d’etat or revolution.

A complex and unresolved struggle for power characterised the political situation in Portugal during the nineteenth century. While the power struggle between different Portuguese interests was going on, the English economic influence grew, with a tremendous increase in the number of British manufactured products in the Portuguese empire. At the same time, the British checked all important Portuguese attempts to industrialise.

33 Ibid, p. 9.
36 Davidson, op. cit., p. 31
The Portuguese territories were not converted into cash economies and potential markets for the home industry. After assuming power in Portugal in 1910, the Republicans initially hoped to replace the slave system with free labour, but soon discovered that forced labour was necessary. With the complete abolition of slavery between 1911 and 1913, contradictions between commercial and productive interests became obvious. Peasants could pay the new hut tax by selling produce, but wages were too low for paid employment to be an attractive alternative. According to the Portuguese forced labour code of 1914, all male ‘natives’ who did not have a regular cash income were obliged to work for wages for at least three months a year. Those who did not fulfil their obligation were liable for correctional labour on public works. A clause allowed the state to hand over correctional labour to private employers. The real labour system in the Portuguese empire was that underpaid and often corrupt officials instructed headmen to round up labourers and then sold them to entrepreneurs.38 The grounds for Portuguese colonialism in the twentieth century were thus laid in Berlin and in Africa, but the effects were also soon felt in far off Timor.

Repercussions in Timor

In 1884 General José Celestino da Silva was appointed Governor of Timor. In line with the increasing importance of Portugal’s military and the country’s attempt at regaining its perceived loss of national pride, he began a ruthless campaign of pacification and occupation of the territory, together with a plan for the development of the colony that aimed to ease the Timorese into a cash economy.39 With da Silva came a renaissance of a belief in Timorese economic viability, and in accordance with this belief, Timor was declared an autonomous district in 1896.40 From now on it was not only the governor who - as a rule - was a military man. Lower levels of the colonial administration were also filled by military personnel. Many of those were “of poor calibre, corrupt, venal and incompetent” and had been assigned to far away Timor as punishment for crimes committed in other places.41 This led to high levels of corruption and abuses of power that did not contribute in any positive way to relations between colonisers and colonised.

In 1898 the Jesuits were allowed back on the island, after having been expelled in 1833. They founded several schools which endured long after the founders were again expelled in 1910. In 1909 there were seventeen schools in the territory, with 1,035 students.42 Under da Silva the liurais became obliged to send their sons to the missionary schools.43 In 1904 a primary school was established at Soibada in central Timor. Its object was to produce teachers for the Catholic Church in addition to training some of the liurais.44 From Soibada came the first Timorese letrados (learned). This new social group, mostly originating from the upper strata of Timorese society, came to be very influential among the population. The hereditary nobility continued to hold political power, but this new social group, which Araújo calls ‘another kind of nobility’, was just as admired because it had succeeded in adapting to colonial values.45

38 Clarence-Smith, op. cit., pp.139-140.
39 Ranck, op. cit., p. 54.
40 Esteves Felgas, op. cit., p. 269.
41 Davidson, op. cit., p. 17.
42 Ranck, op. cit., p. 55.
43 Lawson, op. cit., p. 18.
44 Hill, op. cit., p. 12.
Up to the 1890s it was the Timorese who, without involvement of the colonial authorities, extracted wax, cut sandalwood, and provided small amounts of maize, horses, buffaloes and slaves for export. The commercialisation of these products was in the hands of Chinese merchants and a few Arabs who came from Macau, Hong Kong, Macassar, Kupang or Surabaya for a trading season. Even in the case of coffee, production by local people was absolutely predominant until the very end of the nineteenth century.46

With da Silva came a change in this state of affairs. He believed in the superiority of plantations over smallholdings, and he realised that the mountains around Ermera, to the south-west of Dili, had the best potential for plantation development. He concentrated his military and diplomatic efforts on this region, which was officially considered to be ‘pacified’ by 1900.

The most important and long-lasting of the plantation companies which moved into the newly pacified area was SAPT, (Sociedade Agrícola da Pátria e Trabalho, the Agricultural Society Fatherland and Work), which was formed by da Silva in 1897, and soon turned into virtually a state within a state. Between 1906 and 1914 SAPT had an average output of 45.3 tons of coffee a year. The other large company founded in the time of da Silva was the Companhia do Timor, whose average output in 1912-14 was only 6.2 tons.47 The bulk of the labour force consisted of short-term labourers. Employers indicated to their local military commander how many labourers were needed, and he in turn ordered the chiefs to provide these workers. The planters then paid the chiefs a fixed price per worker provided. In addition to agricultural work, the Timorese were constantly used to carry produce to the coast or to the nearest road.48

From 1908 onwards several of the coffee estates came under direct supervision of permanent military garrisons. The garrisons were responsible not only for keeping peace and order, but also for exercising civil and administrative tasks. To increase the political and military efficiency of the military posts, the colonial administrators began to establish a network of roads built with forced labour, and in 1908 a five hundred-kilometre telegraph connection between the military posts was installed.49

A person of utmost importance during the times of da Silva was Dr Belarmino Lobo. He presided over the municipal council of Dili and was given free reign by the governor. Lobo introduced piped water, street planning, public buildings (including a hospital) and a municipal garden. A period of transition from outpost or village to some semblance of a Western-style town began around 1900.50

Celestino da Silva left Timor in 1908. His successor as Governor, Eduardo Marques, introduced an imposto de captação (head tax). Every Timorese male between the age of eighteen and sixty was liable for this tax, which meant he had to produce agricultural products for the market or engage in wage labour.51 The Portuguese justified this by referring to the already existing traditional tribute of goods and services that the Timorese farmer paid to his liurai. There was, however, a major difference between the two systems, in that the traditional

46 Clarence-Smith, op. cit., p. 17.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid, p. 22.
49 Lawson, op. cit., 12.
50 These developments did not stop Joseph Conrad, in his novel Victory, written in 1915, from describing Dili as ‘that highly pestilential place’. Axel Heyst, the main character of the book, saves an English trader, whose ship had been arrested by the Portuguese authorities ‘on some pretence of irregularity in his papers’. Heyst paid the insignificant sum which the trader had been fined, thereby preventing the authorities from selling the brig among themselves. Joseph Conrad, Victory, an Island Tale. London: Everyman’s Library, 1962, pp. 10-12. I find it quite likely that Conrad’s view of Dili as ‘pestilential’ and as a place of low morality was derived from the writings of Wallace and Forbes.
51 Hill, op. cit., p. 11.
one was seen a reciprocal system in a cosmological context. In upholding this traditional order, both farmer and liurai saw themselves as partaking in a cosmological scheme of reciprocal duties, with the end result being the well-being of the society (cf. Chapter 3.) The head tax imposed by the Portuguese had none of these implications to the Timorese, and therefore caused deep resentment; more so in fact than any other infringement upon indigenous society.  

During the governorship of Filomeno da Cámara (1911-1917) a legal basis for the colonial authorities to claim and distribute land was introduced. However, the colonial need of control over land was never translated into an efficient registration of ownership, partly because the Portuguese lacked the administrative, technical and scientific means to map out Timor’s interior. To facilitate economic dealings in the colony, the Banco Nacional Ultramarino set up a branch in Dili in 1912. 

Filomeno da Cámara was named Governor after the Republicans took power in Lisbon, and the Republicans favoured small farmers and peasants over larger plantations and landowners. This led to a reversal of Celestino da Silva’s policy in Timor, and Filomeno da Cámara gave numerous small concessions to his political clients in the bureaucracy. He believed that granting land to the Timorese would break the power of the liurais, and a few such concessions were granted. Some Dutch, Australian, and Chinese entrepreneurs were also allowed to set up sago palm and coconut plantations. The Republicans had high-minded ideals for the reform of colonial labour, but in practice they merely stamped out slave labour and imposed forced labour more systematically than before. 

The Republicans initially believed that doubling the head tax would stimulate a flow of free labour. This measure provoked rebellions, but (as in Africa) had little effect on labour supplies, as tax could be paid by selling produce. The solution was (again as in Africa) outright coercion. All able-bodied Timorese adults, both men and women, were deemed to have a legal obligation to work for wages, unless they were chiefs and property owners, or were regularly employed. The basic system continued to be that pioneered by Celestino, where local military commanders ordered chiefs to supply a given number of labourers to private employers, but the normal period of labour was increased (by the already mentioned Forced Labour Code of 1914) to three months, and the payment to the liurais was drastically reduced. The poll tax, which had only been slowly and partially imposed since the passing of the 1906 decree, was now systematically collected. The immediate result of this change in policy was a major rebellion. 

**Dom Boaventura**

In 1895 the kingdom of Manufahi (now known as Same) revolted. Attacked by the colonial forces, Manufahi held its positions until 1896, when several strategic positions were taken by the colonial military. A massacre followed and in 1900 Manufahi had to surrender. After the defeat of Manufahi, the Portuguese were confronted with several revolts during the first decade of the twentieth century. Pressure was building, and a large-scale confrontation between the colonisers and the colonised was unavoidable. 

The biggest uprising of all was the one led by Dom Boaventura. On 5 October 1911 a number of liurais entered into a blood-pact against Portuguese domination. This marked the beginning of what was to be the most significant case of resistance against Portuguese rule.

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52 Davidson, op. cit., pp. 9-10.  
54 Clarence-Smith, op. cit., p. 23.  
This uprising was led by Dom Boaventura, the son of the leader of the 1895 revolt, and the rebellion was again centred at Manufahi. Two months after the blood-pact a revolt in Suai started, immediately followed by revolts in numerous other parts of Portuguese Timor. Dom Boaventura succeeded in uniting several of the other ethno-linguistic groups of the island under his leadership. However, as pointed out by Katharine Davidson, “the opposition did not take a unified and consensual form sufficient to be classified as a nationalist rebellion.” Rather, the level of anti-colonial hostility was based on “the actual level of Portuguese incursions into, and influence on, the various regions of the colony in the years immediately preceding the rebellion.” The uprising was based around seven regional Portuguese garrisons; the region surrounding Dili, the region stretching from Baucau to Viqueque, the central southern region centered on Manufahi, the Atabai region and the western border region, the Hato-Lia region south-west of Dili and the Oecusse enclave inside Dutch West Timor. In other parts of the territory, the colonisers’ presence were not as intrusive, and the demands on the population were not felt as harshly. This explains, at least partly, why the rebellion never spread across the whole territory, a scenario which in all likelihood would have meant the end to Portuguese colonialism on Timor.

Not that this scenario was far from reality during the early stages of the rebellion. The rebels attacked Dili, and three severed Portuguese heads were impaled on poles outside the town. Facing the possibility of total defeat, Governor Camara decided instead to brave the uprising and quell the Timorese resistance to Portuguese rule once and for all. This could not be accomplished without outside help, and on Camara’s request two warships were sent from Mozambique with troops and arms. Jaime do Inso, second lieutenant aboard the Pátria, wrote a report about the uprising. The report tells of skirmishes as far apart as Oecusse, Baucau and Quelicai, an area covering most of central Timor. Regarding the reasons for the uprising he wrote:

The first must reside, probably, in the warlike and proud character of the Timorese, who, for the same reason that we, when a stranger enters our house by force, do not readily accept interference in their house. This would be the more remote cause, aggravated with time and with other more immediate causes. Of these, I have heard say, one of the principal was a proposed augmentation of the head tax, from one pataca to two patacas, ten avos. I heard too, that in the first battles of the people of Manufahi they said to our representatives: ‘come and get the two patacas, if you can!’ Besides these, other causes were pointed to: the prohibition of the cutting of sandalwood before a certain age, the imposition of a tax of two patacas for every tree cut, the registration of coconut trees and livestock, the creation of a new tax, apparently of two patacas, on the slaughter of animals for festive occasions.

With fresh troops and superior fire power, Governor Camara set out to crush the uprising. In January 1912, he led a force inland to set up a base at Aileu. Several reinos decided to join his force, some traditionally hostile to Manufahi, others faced the choice of either being attacked or joining Camara’s force. Sometimes lower-tanking chefses de sucos chose sides independently of their liurais, depending on local agendas and the wish to be on the winning side in the conflict. Camara’s warriors eventually numbered about 9,000. He split up this formidable force into four columns who marched along alternative routes towards Manufahi, while the Pátria shelled villages along the south coast from the sea. Dom Boaventura’s forces

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57 Davidson, op. cit., p. 232.
58 Pataca was the local Portuguese currency in Timor. It was not accepted by other countries.
59 Hill, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
60 Davidson, op. cit., p. 19.
gradually retreated, until they were surrounded and besieged in a last stronghold high up on Mount Leo-Laco. Boaventura finally decided to try and break out of the encirclement. About 12,000 men, women and children stormed down the mountain on August 10, 1912, and the majority, including Boaventura himself, did manage to break through. The ones who didn’t were slaughtered mercilessly. At least 3,000 died in the resulting two day massacre. Dom Boaventura gave himself up one month later. By that time the victory had been celebrated in Dili, in festivities where Governor Camara allowed the local tradition of parading the severed heads of the defeated. According to Timorese oral history, Boaventura died in custody and was buried under the gates of the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, so that the churchgoers would have to trample on his grave twice while attending mass.

A Portuguese administration across Timor

The defeat of Dom Boaventura marked the beginning of firm Portuguese control of the territory. The Portuguese followed it up by establishing a civil administration in the interior. The colonial administration attempted to deprive the liurais of their powerful position by abolishing the potentially dangerous kingdoms, reinos, and dividing them into smaller units, sucos. The Portuguese administrative districts that were set up – initially numbering ten, later to become thirteen - were largely based on the sucos, as well as on the already existing military garrisons. Every suco was administered by a chefe do suco, responsible for supervising the villages within his realm, villages that were headed by Timorese chiefs, chefes de povoações. At the summit of the administrative hierarchy was the Governor in Dili, who mediated between Timor and the government in Lisbon.

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61 Ibid, pp. 232-250. See also Lawson, op. cit. & Gunn, History of Timor.
When the administrative system was changed, the “official” power of the liurais was abandoned, and village chiefs and sub-district chiefs were appointed. As some sub-districts covered the borders of former kingdoms, the liurai could easily be turned into a sub-district chief or a village chief. In other places, the Portuguese exchanged liurais for more loyal people as sub-district chiefs. The liurais who were released from their formal power, and were not appointed as sub-district chiefs, transformed into unofficial powers in their kingdoms. The official power was handed over in an adequate way to the new village chiefs, but on the informal level, there was no “loss of power”. The powers of the kings remained and the people still adhered to them. The same happened with the village chiefs, who were appointed by the Portuguese in accordance with their loyalty.65

In most cases, this did not seem to run counter to the local perception of legitimate political leadership. The important thing was that village chiefs and hamlet chiefs originated from the royal houses and therefore had ancestral legitimation for their role. If new appointees were from the “wrong” house, there was a way to ritually pass on the political authority to another family. Thus, the new introductions from the outside were neatly integrated into the existing traditional structure. Under Portuguese rule, the concepts of descent and customary law, conduct of ceremonies, or the position of ritual authorities were never really challenged.66 Reflecting the relative weakness of the Portuguese administration, some kingdoms were allowed to retain their armies, and movements between the administrative units were proscribed.67

Since the days of Governor António Coelho Guerreiro in the early 18th century, the Portuguese had bestowed military titles on Timorese chiefs. This policy of tying the local leadership closer to the colonial administration was now perpetuated, albeit more systematically. A liurai (or régulo, in Portuguese) was granted the title of major, the chefe de suco was a capitão (captain) and the village chief was entitled to the rank of sargento-adjutante (assistant sergeant).68 Governor Câmara imposed forced cultivation on a large scale on the defeated Timorese, forcing each family to plant 600 coffee bushes. Coconuts were Camara’s main concern after coffee, and he claimed that there was hardly a stretch of land of the island suitable for coconuts which had been spared. The governor also ordered thousands of sandal seedlings to be raised in nurseries.69 Newly planted cash crops were grown on ‘communal plantations’ and a fixed percentage of the harvest belonged to the state. Camara created a new agricultural department to oversee this whole process, financed by an additional tax on the Timorese. Stricter controls over the marketing of peasant output initiated a process whereby the Chinese and Arab merchants settled in Timor in a more permanent fashion.70 Camara’s forced cultivation was mostly a failure. Coffee was planted in unsuitable areas, where neither the climate nor the soils were appropriate. To comply with government orders with minimum effort, the Timorese planted coffee bushes with little space between them and hardly looked after them, resulting in low yields. All the sandalwood seedlings in the nurseries died, and the Timorese, bitter about the robbery of their lands, especially when

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65 Hohé, op. cit., p. 574.
66 Ibid, pp. 574-575.
67 Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 41.
69 The sandalwood trade had a brief revival when the pharmaceutical industry began to use sandalwood oil. Ruthless exploitation between 1890 and 1910 led, however, to a quick diminishing of resources. The discovery that the roots were rich in oil meant the end for the remaining forests. From 890,000 kilos in 1910, exports fell to 20,000 kilos in 1925, when felling and export were finally prohibited. Ormeling, op. cit., p.136.
70 Clarence-Smith, op. cit., p. 18.
sacred groves were cut down to plant cash crops, set fire to some of the ‘communal plantations’.

The border-settlement of 1859 had left Portugal in possession of a large enclave, formed by the districts of Oecusse and Noi-Muti, on the Dutch side of the island, while the Dutch had retained control of the district of Maukatar, surrounded by Portuguese territory. To end this inconvenient situation, a convention was signed in London in 1893 which provided for a commission to determine a new line of demarcation. This proved to be difficult and for many years, the question of the small enclaves was a cause for negotiations between the two governments. The two powers agreed in 1913, in a treaty called the *Sentensa Arbitral*, to submit the controversy to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, and in 1914 the boundary for Timor was finally decided along the limits of present East/West Timor, with Portugal retaining the enclave Oecusse.

Apart from this cartographic/political partitioning of the island, there was also a cultural, popular division on the Portuguese, eastern part of the island stemming from this period. According to Macassae (a major Timorese ethno-linguistic group) oral tradition, the usage of the terms *Kaladi* and *Firaku* first appeared post the great rebellion of 1911-1912. The Timorese forces under Dom Boaventura had consisted of a coalition of several ethno-linguistic groups, all of whom were later to be conjointly called Kaladi, while the opposing coalition were labelled together as Firaku. Among the Timorese evolved over time a stereotyped and popular distinction between talkative easterners, Firaku, and more taciturn Westerners, Kaladi, thereby also - theoretically - creating the conditions allowing the territory’s non-Portuguese population to ‘think East Timor’, i.e. to imagine a greater whole, consisting of these two halves. As I have argued at some length elsewhere (Jannisa, 1997), this identification excluded Timorese peoples to the west of the border with Dutch West Timor; the Kaladi/Firaku bipartition is strictly an East Timorese affair. The Kaladi/Firaku division was also a way of mentally arranging a colonial/historical reality that fit in with the local view of religion, as well as society, being based on contrasts, or complementary oppositions (cf. Ch. 5.). The Portuguese, however, not only provided the administrative framework for the creation of an ‘imagined community’ à la Benedict Anderson; they also left a cultural vestige which consisted of vastly more than indigenous stereotypes within that administrative unity. Elizabeth Traube, who conducted anthropological research in East Timor from October 1972 through November 1974, in the process learning the Mambai language, saw East Timorese culture(s) as being:

...in significant respects, the product of their historical interaction with Portuguese colonial policies ... Over the past three centuries Portuguese administrative and economic policies have interacted with and influenced the indigenous cultures of East Timor, generating a distinctive situation which contrasts markedly even with that on the western half of the island.

There will be reason to return to the significance of this Portuguese cultural vestige in chapters to come.

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73 Interview with Justino Guterres by the present author, Canberra 1995.
PART I. THE ESTABLISHING OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR
PART 2

PORTUGUESE TIMOR 1915-1975. FROM ISOLATION TO INVASION
7. Portuguese Timor during the Salazar era

**Estado Novo**

The labour abuse in the Portuguese colonies became an international scandal with the publication of the so-called Ross report in 1925. This scandal contributed to the fall of the republican regime, as did growing financial chaos in the colonies which worsened the crisis in Portugal itself. An army coup took place in 1926, bringing in a military dictatorship.

Salazar, a former professor of political economy, was invited by the dictatorship to become finance minister. He resigned when he was not given full veto power in financial matters, but was recalled in 1928 and given the powers he demanded. In speeches in May and June 1930 he outlined the ideological and institutional form for an *Estado Novo* (New State), with which he planned to replace the temporary dictatorship. It was to be a corporate republic based on a strong state, grounded in ‘patriotic unity’ and the moral doctrines of a Catholic corporatism ‘free from the disorders of individualism, socialism, parliamentarism, and partisan spirit’.

During the world-wide recession of the early 1930s France sharply reduced its earlier substantial imports of Portuguese wine for blending purposes, and, like the USA and Brazil, refused to accept any more Portuguese immigrants. Portuguese exports of wine and foodstuffs to Brazil also dwindled because of new tariffs imposed by the Brazilian authorities. At the same time, Brazilian controls on capital exports meant misery to thousands of Portuguese families dependent on remittances from Brazil. Adding to the problems, prices for the important Portuguese export products of cork and tinned fish fell on the world market. Portugal was in crisis, and Salazar saw the colonies as the solution to the crisis.

In 1930 the Colonial Act was introduced. This Act sought to reverse the trend of the 1920s, which had been toward financial and political autonomy. Salazar was of the opinion that all important colonial authority should reside in Lisbon, and under the Colonial Act the colonies came under direct rule from Lisbon. Local Legislative Councils were set up in the colonies representing local interests, but had no effective power. The Colonial Act also set up two categories of people, the *indígenas*, the unassimilated natives, and the *não indígenas*, which included whites, *mestiços* (mixed population between Portuguese and Timorese) and *assimilados*. In 1932 Salazar became Prime Minister, and in 1933 he introduced a new constitution, which provided for a President elected by a restricted electorate, a Prime Minister selected by the President, and a cabinet appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The National Assembly, also elected by a restricted electorate, had limited powers. A second house, the ‘Corporative Chamber’, was composed of representatives of various economic, social and cultural interest groups. A political party, the *União Nacional*, was formed, and it has been described as ‘a party which was not a party in

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2 Ibid, p. 12.
5 Ibid, p. 15.
6 Hill, op. cit., p. 18.
the usual sense of the term: it was primarily a field organisation at the disposal of the Premier for tying local notables to the regime.  

Catholic missions, which had been the subject of anticlerical purges during the years of Republican rule, were reinstated by the Estado Novo and given privileges which took institutionalised form with the signing of a Concordat with the Vatican in 1940 and the enactment of the Missionary Statute in 1941. The Concordat regulated missionary activity in the colonies and specified rules governing the appointment of bishops. One result of this was that East Timor was made a separate diocese from Macau. The Concordat said, among other things, that foreign missionaries had to renounce the laws of their own countries, and submit themselves to Portuguese laws. The Missionary Statute stipulated that ‘education especially intended for natives shall be entirely entrusted to missionary personnel and their auxiliaries’. All these measures – the Colonial Act, the Concordat, and the Missionary Statute – were to have great impact on Timor. However, already before the Concordat, missionary involvement in education had led to the foundation of the first diocesan seminary, the Seminário de Nossa Senhora de Fátima (i.e. the Seminary of Our Lady of Fatima), in Soibada in 1937. An institution in which many of the later nationalist leaders were to spend some formative years. After signing the Concordat with the Vatican in 1940, and the Decree of the Missionary Statute the following year, the Catholic Missions were heavily subsidised by both metropolitan and provincial governments. The education for rural Timorese offered by the missions, originally called ensino rudimentar (rudimentary education), later called ensino de adaptação (functional education) was second-class compared to the ensino oficial provided by the state for the children of Europeans, mestiços and ‘assimilated natives’. The general aim of the ensino de adaptação was to give the pupils a feeling for being Portuguese.

A further school system was run by the army Comando Territorial e Independente do Timor as part of its social action programme. These schools tended to be in inaccessible villages which would not otherwise have schools. In 1972/1973 the army was running ninety-three of these schools. Many of the teachers came from the ranks of politically unreliable officers, and the Timorese children often got better instruction from the military than from the ordinary teachers.

Catholic religious orders, some from countries other than Portugal, ran some larger boarding schools, colégios. Instruction in agricultural techniques was given at some of these, in addition to the Portuguese-oriented studies. These schools were also to play a crucial role in the education of the Timorese elite. Religious orders also provided the main form of secondary schooling open to Timorese, such as the Jesuit-run seminary at Dare, near Dili, and a school run by Italian priests of the Salesian order at Fatumaca, twenty-five km from Baucau, the second largest town.

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7 Ibid, p. 19.
8 The Pope at the time was Pius XII, who four days after being elected in February 1939 wrote a letter "to the Illustrious Herr Adolf Hitler, Fuhrer and Chancellor of the German Reich!" In this letter he assured the illustrious one that "We remain devoted to the spiritual welfare of the German people entrusted to your leadership." A few months later, and on instructions from the Pope, the cardinal of Berlin sent - what was to become annual - congratulations to the Fuhrer on his birthday on April 30. To the congratulations were added "... fervent prayers which the Catholics of Germany are sending to heaven on their altars" (Christopher Hitchens, God is not Great. London: Atlantic Books, 2007, pp. 238-239.) The somewhat less than infallible actions (or, rather, non-actions) of the Vatican - as well as courageous and compassionate actions by individual Catholic clerics and laymen - will echo through the coming pages of this book.
10 Hill, op. cit., p. 22.
11 Ibid, pp. 44-46.
13 Hill, op. cit., p. 47.
The Colonial Act, as we have seen, set up two categories of people, the *indígenas* (unassimilated natives) and the *não indígenas* (whites, mestíços and assimilados). To gain the status of an assimilado, including Portuguese citizenship, a Timorese had to be eighteen years old, prove his ability to speak Portuguese, earn sufficient income for himself and his family, prove he was of ‘good character’ and demonstrate that he ‘possessed those qualities necessary for the exercise of the public and private rights of a Portuguese citizen.’ He must also not have refused military service. The wife and children of an assimilado could acquire citizenship if they spoke Portuguese and could demonstrate their ‘good character’. The assimilado could travel without permission, did not have to pay the head tax, was exempted from contract labour, and could vote in elections for the Portuguese National Assembly and the local Legislative Council.14

According to official Portuguese figures, at the end of December 1936 the population of Portuguese Timor was 463,996. Among these were 359 whites,15 689 mestíços, 157 negroes, 2,687 yellows (almost all Chinese), and 460,104 Oceanians, i.e., Timorese (Mendes Correa 1944:192). There were always a number of political deportados among the white population of Timor. The Australian military intelligence’s *Terrain Study* of 1941 writes of fifty, distributed throughout the island. They were generally allowed to move freely, but had to report to the local administration once a week.16

The Chinese who settled on East Timor were predominantly from two distinct groups. The first were the early settlers, from a variety of Chinese sea ports, who began settling on East Timor from the late sixteenth hundreds and early seventeen hundreds. The second, and main group, were the Hakka from Southern China.17 Direct Hakka immigration to East Timor began in 1907 and in earnest from the early 1920s, when regular trading was established between Timor, Macau and Hong Kong. It is not clear why these people were attracted to Portuguese Timor, but the Chinese came in spite of East Timor’s poor economic reputation, and they eventually came to dominate commerce there. A large, closed, traditional Chinese community developed, which created its own institutions, such as places of worship and schools. There were severe strains between the Chinese and the native Timorese; Chinese stores in the interior were always situated close to Portuguese troop garrisons at the postos.18

Teófilo Duarte, the first Governor appointed by the military, tried energetically to force the Timorese to grow coffee. According to his own account, he distributed twenty-six million coffee seedlings between 1927 and 1929.19 Governor Duarte estimated that SAPT was producing around 200 tons of coffee a year by the end of the 1920s, and was buying another 100 tons from Timorese producers. SAPT was also producing copra and cocoa, and had become the major competitor to the Chinese in this sector of the economy.20

Under the Estado Novo there was an attempt to create a kind of landed gentry of collaborators with the Portuguese, including deportados who were given large tracts of land to dilute their radicalism.

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14 Ibid., p. 18.
16 Allied Geographical Section in Co-operation with Directorate of Intelligence, A.A.F. South Pacific Area, *Terrain Study No. 50, Area Study of Portuguese Timor*, 1941, p. 66.
18 Ibid, p. 67.
19 Clarence-Smith, op. cit., p 19.
All the remaining ‘communal plantations’ of Câmara’s period were divided up, with a large part given as private property to liurais, and the rest to commoners. Even in the late 1950s the liurais still extracted unpaid labour from their subjects, even though it had become formally illegal to do so. A stratum of wealthy families thus retained access to land and labour on a scale which gave them considerable advantage in cash crop production.21

The Catholic Church was also a large landowner. The parish churches and monasteries – sometimes with their own colégios, boarding schools – owned large tracts of land which were tilled by the students and fed the local population. It has to be emphasized that there was a lopsided pattern of land ownership in Portuguese Timor, with the large holdings mainly in the eastern part. In the east the land is less fertile, and the hilly areas less suitable for coffee than elevated parts in the west, and thus attracted less interest from the Portuguese.22 This is one of the factors behind the still existing - not only physical, but also mental - “east-west” division in East Timor.

From its humble beginnings – circa half a dozen buildings around a natural harbour in the mid-19th century - Dili had grown to about 5,000 permanent residents before WWII. With this increase came also a sex industry, where pimps were selling women for sexual services from small brothels littered throughout the city’s neighbourhoods as well as restaurants and bars. Many women in various forms of prostitution during this time may also have been trafficked. There is scant information that women were brought to East Timor from Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. Some Timorese women entered into “local contracts” with foreigners, mostly Portuguese military members. These women were akin to paid domestic servants but also provided sexual services over a long period of time. Some sources suggest that when the foreigner left, the woman remained in the home and served the next resident.23

Portuguese rule of the territory was not noted for its efficiency, and neither was it benign. An Australian Defence Intelligence report from 1941 tells of a simple, but brutal system:

Each adult native must pay to the Government, which receives no financial aid from Portugal, 6 patacas24 per annum. Strict discipline is enforced, and for the slightest offence the natives are punished. This punishment takes the form of confinement to jail for long periods, in addition to large doses of ‘palmitori’. This consists of caning the palm of the hands with a heavy stick approximately 1 inch in diameter and about 18 inches in length, the top of which is shaped like a flat spoon pierced with a number of holes. Men, women and children alike receive punishment of this nature, and it is a common sight to see gangs of natives roped or chained together working on the rice fields or marching back to the calaboose at night.25

Apart from the successful establishment of large coffee growing estates, Estado Novo in Portuguese Timor was already from the outset characterised by neglect and non-development. The road system consisted mainly of a motor road along the north coast, and it was possible to cross the island by road at only two places.26

21 Ibid, p. 20.
24 The Timorese currency, the pataca, was backed by the trade and assets of Timor itself and of Macau. It was not accepted by other countries.
25 Allied Geographical Section, op. cit., p. 69.
26 Ibid, p. 35.
The figures for export (almost exclusively coffee) and import were very low. The Dutch East Indies was the chief buyer, followed by Portugal and its colonies and then Japan. Imports came mainly from the Dutch East Indies and Japan. Despite the relatively small amounts involved, Japan was becoming a major trade partner of Portuguese Timor. The organisation behind the arrival of Japanese interests in the area was the Tai nan’yo hōsaku kenkyū iinkai (Policy Study Committee for the South Seas Area), or Taninken, established in 1935 to facilitate Japan’s planned southward expansion. On 20 July 1936 the Taninken issued the following directives to the Nan’yo Kōhatsu Kabushiki Kaisha (South Seas Development Company), known by its abbreviation Nankō, in a ‘Memorandum for the Planned Advance into Portuguese Timor’:

We shall use the good offices of the Nan’yo Kōhatsu for concrete advance and give the company carte blanche to secure a footing on Portuguese Timor. With regard to entrepreneurial opportunities in the territory, we shall meet the wishes of the local government and gradually guide it and the people to a pro-Japanese attitude; as soon as we have a foothold, we shall think of a next step ....

In 1940 the Japanese threatened to drive the Portuguese out of Macau if the Portuguese did not meet certain Japanese demands regarding Timor, and in April the same year Japan was welcomed to operate in Timor in three areas: the development of mineral resources throughout the island (with the exception of oil), the inauguration of a sea route to Timor, and the establishment of an air route to Timor.

The Australian Department of External Affairs saw the establishment of Japanese interests in Timor as ‘the move of a pawn in a big game of southward expansion ... Australia being the real objective’. The Australian Government reacted by pressing the Portuguese Government into granting permission for the establishment of a weekly air service between Darwin and Dili. The permission was granted in December 1940, and the following month Qantas Empire Airways made their first regular stop-overs at Dili on their flight from Darwin to Batavia.

Following reports that Japan was planning to establish a broadcasting station and a consulate in Dili, the Australian Government sent David Ross of the Civil Aviation Department to Dili to, officially, administer Qantas flying services and, unofficially, to monitor and report on Japanese activities on the island. In October 1941 Dai Nippon Airways was granted permission for a fortnightly service between Kobe and Dili, and Japan soon also established a consulate in Dili. The Australian Department of External Affairs was reluctant to grant Ross consular status in the belief that the Portuguese Government would thereby be able to resist Japanese claims for the same right. When Japan got their consul at Dili matters changed, and Ross was made a British consul.

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27 As Portuguese statistics give export numbers in patacas, and some of these sources have these converted into Australian pounds, the numbers may not mean much to the reader of today. In any case, exports for 1940, were valued at 660,425 patacas, equal to £A 51,596, while imports for the same period totalled 616,617 patacas (£A 48,173). These sums would have been fairly sizeable, but not fabulous, private fortunes of the time.


29 Ibid, p. 156.


31 Ibid, pp. 156-158.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.
W.W.II in Portuguese Timor

The Netherlands declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941 (The US entered WWII on the same day, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour the previous day). Australia and the Netherlands had previously made an agreement that if Japan was to enter the war, Australia would provide forces to help defending Dutch West Timor, and on 12 December a 1,400 strong Australian contingent, known as Sparrow Force, arrived at Kupang, the capital of West Timor. Sparrow Force was deployed around Kupang and the airfield at Penfui. The Australian troops consisted of the Tasmanian 2/40th battalion and the largely West Australian 2/2 Independent Company. At Penfui they were joined by the Sparrows, a British anti-aircraft unit, with experience from the Battle of Britain. On 17 December, a combined Dutch-Australian force, without acquiring Portuguese agreement, and under protest from the Governor, occupied Dili and other places on the north coast of Portuguese Timor, ostensibly in order to pre-empt Japanese landings in the territory. It may be that this action instead provoked the very attack that is was supposed to hinder. West Timor came under attack from Japanese aircraft on 26 January, and on 16 February an allied convoy carrying supplies and fresh forces to Kupang was subject to intense attacks and forced to return to Darwin. By the latter half of February the Japanese forces were in control of most of West Timor.

Taking Portuguese Timor had not originally been part of Japan’s plans, since the territory previously had posed no military threat, and Japan enjoyed friendly, or at least cordial, relations with neutral Portugal, and viewed it’s diplomatic presence in Lisbon as an important source of information. A telegram from the Japanese southern headquarters to army headquarters in Tokyo on 5 January 1942, carrying information about the Dutch and Australian troops in Portuguese Timor, and asking permission to attack this enemy from air and land. The telegram led to a lengthy debate, weighing the pros and cons of such an action. This dragged on for many weeks, and involved representatives from the army, the navy, international legal advisors, the foreign ministry, the prime minister as well as the emperor, who wished for Japan to remain neutral vis-à-vis Portugal. Finally a decision was made, and on 19 February 1942 the Japanese attacked Portuguese Timor. When the Japanese 1,500 strong Japanese force arrived, the allied soldiers at first believed they were Portuguese colonial troops from Africa, there to replace the Dutch and Australians. The Portuguese and British governments had reached an agreement to this effect, precisely not to provoke Japan by the presence of hostile allied troops in neutral Portuguese Timor. A Portuguese military force had also sailed from Lourenco Marques but, unbeknownst to the Australians in Dili, had been prevented from landing in Timor by the Japanese and hence returned to Africa.36

Greatly outnumbered, allied troops took to the mountains, after fierce fighting. On the very same day, the Japanese also attacked Sparrow Force in West Timor, which surrendered on 23 February. Some 290 of them, however, escaped across the border to Portuguese Timor, where they eventually teamed up with the troops who had fled Dili. Together they waged a guerrilla campaign against the Japanese, until they were evacuated to Australia from the south coast a year later. Small commando units later returned to assist resistance until war’s end.37

Portuguese-Japanese relations in Timor came under severe strain as the occupation progressed. The Portuguese Governor upheld an independent line which led to his authority

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34 The 2/2 Independent Company was one of four heavily armed troops created in 1941, who had received special training in tasks which included raids, demolitions, sabotage, subversion and organizing civil resistance. Grant McLachlan, *Sparrow. A Chronicle of Defiance*. Havelock North, New Zealand: "klaut", 2014, p. 542-543.


being by-passed, and the colony’s telegraphic communication to Lisbon was severed.\textsuperscript{38} The Japanese were not the sole threat to the Portuguese. The remaining Portuguese forces, the \textit{Companhia dos Caçadores}, led several punitive expeditions against Timorese who had been incited by the Japanese to revolt against the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{39} Contrary to popular legend, some East Timorese sided with the Japanese, in the belief that they represented salvation from the white colonial yoke. In late August 1942, Timorese rebels killed the Portuguese chefe do posto and two deportados at Maubisse. This uprising was put down by Portuguese led Timorese troops from Ainaro, Same and Manatuto. Soon after the Portuguese commander, his wife and several other were killed at Aileu by a so called \textit{coluna negra} (black column), consisting mostly of Timorese from the western part of the island. Soon after this incident, the colonial decided that all Portuguese in Timor, around six hundred at the time, would be disarmed and concentrated in a designated place, ostensibly for their protection from the Timorese.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, in late October 1942 the Portuguese were interned in some small areas on the northern coast, at Liquica, Maubara and Bazarute.\textsuperscript{41}

During the Japanese occupation as many as 700 Timorese women were enslaved and used as “comfort women”, i.e. sexual slaves. It appears that the Portuguese Governor, Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Carvalho, was helpful in rounding up women for this purpose. He later justified this with the argument that these women were already prostitutes and that their use was imperative to protect Portuguese women from rape.\textsuperscript{42}

For about one year the Australian 2/2 Independent Company carried out guerrilla warfare against the Japanese forces on Timor.\textsuperscript{43} An estimated fifteen hundred Japanese were killed, as opposed to forty-nine Australians.\textsuperscript{44} Their successful tactic of hit-and-run ambushes made the Japanese think they were up against a far bigger force. Most importantly, they ensured Japan kept an entire army division on Timor, troops that otherwise would have been valuable to the Japanese war effort elsewhere.\textsuperscript{45} The resistance by the Australian commando force was made possible only through the assistance of the main part of the Timorese population, who provided them with food and information about Japanese movements. Some young Timorese even joined the Australians in the bush, each choosing a soldier to assist as \textit{criado}, guide and general helper. The Australians also armed and trained “significant numbers” of loyal Timorese in elementary rifle use.\textsuperscript{46}

The degree of Timorese resistance to the Japanese and their support for the Australians can be judged from the account of Ray Aitken, who was a member of a raiding party on Dili in May 1942:

\textsuperscript{39} Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{42} Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{43} To be technically correct, the 2/4th Independent Company replaced the 2/2 in September 1942, and for a few months the two forces overlapped, until the 2/2 Company left Timor in December that same year.
\textsuperscript{45} McLachlan, op. cit., p. 549.
\textsuperscript{46} Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 19.
The raid on Dili was conducted on the night of May 15/16 1942. A two man daylight reconnaissance on the eastern approaches to Dili proved that there was little enemy activity outside the wire which enclosed the main township and the outlying group of huts and a coconut plantation to the south east of the town. They established contact with the people of the village of Cumeer on the forward slopes of the first ridge to the eastward of Dili. It is perhaps symptomatic of the Australian prestige and also the Mambai hatred of the Japanese that these people who had lived only perhaps 2,000 yards from the Jap perimeter and were in day to day contact with him saw nothing strange in a night raid being mounted from their village. It is also evidence of the trust we placed in these people that I do not think it occurred to any of the force engaged that treachery was even a remote possibility.\textsuperscript{47}

The commandos were also supported by dissident Portuguese, mainly deportados who did not accept Portugal’s neutrality policy. In the beginning of 1943 it was decided to withdraw the Australian commandos from Timor and let the Japanese stay there until the enveloping movements of the later stages of the war isolated them and forced capitulation without further loss of Australian lives.\textsuperscript{48} The majority of Australians were evacuated on the night between 9-10 January 1943, leaving a small force, ‘Lizard’ of volunteers to observe and report on Japanese activities. This group was finally evacuated on 10 February 1943.\textsuperscript{49}

The Japanese occupation led to much suffering for the East Timorese. An estimated 40,000 Timorese died between 1941 and 1946 in a war that had virtually nothing to do with either Timorese or Portuguese interests. These deaths resulted from four main causes; direct Japanese retaliation against Timorese for helping Australian soldiers, conditions in forced labour battalions, Japanese and, particularly, allied bombing raids, and starvation and disease directly resulting from the occupation.\textsuperscript{50} Jim Landman, a member of the 2/4\textsuperscript{th} Independent Company, observed a number of years later:

\begin{quote}
The Timorese were often the ones being killed and they didn’t stand to win anything. They were caught up in the middle of a war and they often had no choice, they just had to go along with the nearest people who had the guns. We could be nasty and shoot them if they betrayed us, and the Japanese were cruel.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

Upon Japan’s capitulation Canberra sent a cable to London, asking that no assistance be given to enable Portuguese forces to reach Timor; the Japanese surrender should be to Australian forces only. The Australian message also said that ‘the Portuguese failed us completely in the arrangements made for the defence of Timor ... and as a result our forces were left to sustain single handed ... for a long period an epic guerrilla warfare’, and thus should not take part in a surrender.\textsuperscript{52} Adding to the negative Australian feelings was the evacuation to Australia of 535 persons from Portuguese Timor during the war. Some were pro-Allied Administration officers, but the group mainly consisted of ‘400 natives and half-castes’ who were quartered at a military camp called Bob’s farm, near Newcastle, New South Wales.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{48} Callinan, op. cit., p. xxvii.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p. 226.
\textsuperscript{50} Thatcher, op. cit., pp. 27-28
\textsuperscript{52} Peter Hastings, ‘The Timor Problem, part III. Some Australian attitudes’ In \textit{Australian Outlook}, No. 2, 1975, p. 332.
\textsuperscript{53} It was among them that the small groups sent into Timor following the evacuation of the 2/2 Independent Company were formed.
Lisbon proved very reluctant to contribute financial support, suggesting instead that they should return to Timor, which would have meant certain death at the hands of the Japanese. The Portuguese Government instructed its Consul in Melbourne that the salaries of evacuated Portuguese Administration officials should cease during the period they were away from Timor.\(^{54}\) The British exerted great pressure on Canberra to not insist on the demand that Japan surrender to Australia only, and succeeded. Three days after Japan’s formal surrender to Portugal in Lisbon, Australia received the surrender of all Japanese forces on Timor on 11 September at Kupang, in West Timor.\(^{55}\) The Australian commander proceeded to Dili on 23 September, where he formally informed the Governor of the surrender and congratulated him on the restoration of his authority.\(^{56}\) A few days after the formal restoration of Portuguese rule, a ship arrived from Mozambique, carrying the military force that the Australians wanted Britain to stop from arriving.

Unlike the situation on the Dutch side of the border, there was no international pressure – apart from the unsuccessful Australian attempt - to stop the Portuguese from reinstating their presence in Timor. The explanation to this lies in the connection between Portugal, the USA and Great Britain regarding the Azores Islands. Portugal granted, on 13 October 1943, bases on the Azores to both Britain and the United States. Following this agreement, the United States informed Portugal on 26 October 1943 that it ‘undertook to respect Portuguese sovereignty in all Portuguese colonies’.\(^{57}\) On 2 February 1948 the US obtained a five year extension of an existing agreement for transit facilities for US military aircraft at Lagens airfield in the Azores, and in May 1948 the Portuguese extended facilities to the UK in the Azores, identical to those accorded to the US. Salazar was to play this Azores card repeatedly and successfully up until the 1960s in order to gain Anglo-American support for the maintenance of the Portuguese overseas empire.\(^{58}\)

**Reconstruction**

Apart from the heavy loss of life, the occupation had left the economy of Portuguese Timor in ruins. Dili was levelled to the ground by allied bombs. Many of the inhabitants returned to their home villages, including the “comfort women”, who often had to suffer social discrimination against them. As part of a reconstruction plan the Portuguese experimented with different territorial divisions for their administration, finally arriving at a solution where the province was divided into thirteen administrative divisions, called **conselhos** (councils), with an administration headed by the **administrador do conselho**. Apart from administrative duties, he exercised the powers of magistrate, chief of police, commander of second-line (native Timorese) troops, co-ordinator of economic activity and development plans and so on. He also usually acted as mayor of the town in which his office and residence was located. The conselhos were divided into between four and six postos or sub-districts.\(^{59}\) The postos consisted of a variable number of **sukus**. Sukus were comprised of **povoações** or villages. At the top of the hierarchy was the governor of the province, residing in Dili. Below him were the heads of conselhos, chosen by the governor. The **Chefe do posto**, administrator of the posto, was also appointed by the governor.

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\(^{54}\) Hastings, op. cit., p. 329.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.
\(^{56}\) Ibid, p. 333.
\(^{57}\) Gunn, op. cit., p. 3.
\(^{58}\) Ibid, p. 2.
\(^{59}\) Dunn, op. cit., p. 42.
At the two lowest levels, those of suku and povoação, the office holders were also referred to as Cheifes, but they were elected by members of the village (at the level of povoação) and by all the component villages (at the level of the suku). The elected officials were subject to approval by the administrator. The administrators and chefe do posto received their pay from the colonial government, but the Chefe do Suku and Chefe da Povoação received a percentage of the amassed tax. Many liurai unsurprisingly became strong supporters of Portuguese rule because of this, and through their percentage of the collected tax and various other advantages to which their position entitled them.

Timorese who had collaborated with the Japanese were dealt with harshly. Many were imprisoned for several years on Ataúro or at Ainaro. Many collaborators apparently fled to West Timor, where they settled in the border area. In May 1946, the Australian Consul in Dili reported that the border district, Fronteira Circunscrição, was the province where most of the collaboration with the Japanese had occurred. According to the Portuguese, this was caused by the infiltration of natives from Dutch Timor. This district will turn up again as a trouble spot, and as a base for the pro-Indonesian APODETI party later in this story.

Regarding the economy and infrastructure, much of the initial effort was concentrated in Dili, where a few kilometres of roadway were paved. A number of municipal buildings were built and the port facilities were improved. The reconstruction opened new incentives and opportunities for migration into Dili. Labourers, stonemasons and carpenters came to work there, motivated by a desire for money and the western goods it could buy, as well as education for their children.

Kaladi and Firaku.

It seems that from this period the terms Kaladi and Firaku attained more common use. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the division into Kaladi and Firaku draws upon popular stereotypes that originate from the period of the pacification wars during the early twentieth century. The terms themselves may be Portuguese derived, from “calado” (silent, quiet, hushed) and “vira o cu” (to turn one’s back to a speaker in a rude manner), the later being a reference to the easterners reputation of turning their backs to their colonial masters when called to observe instructions. The distinction is based more on geography than ethnicity, as within both terms a number of ethno-linguistic groups are included. The western part of East Timor – areas close to Dili itself and Ermera, the region which attracted the early coffee growers – were the first to be pacified by the colonial troops. Farther to the east, Portuguese influence was far weaker.

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62 According to Bernard Callinan, quoted in Jolliffe 1978, p. 45, the Japanese efforts to subject areas were ‘child’s play’ compared to the methods of their Timorese collaborators. Violence inflicted on Timorese acting on behalf of foreign rulers has been a recurring phenomenon throughout history, and will play a dominant role in the final chapters of this book.
63 Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 6.
66 In later years, the Tetun words loromo (from the west) and lorosa’e (from the east) were gaining in usage, and also attained more political meanings. In 2006 these meanings were not only political, but also outright sinister, but that is beyond the scope of this book.
This led to a situation where the people in the west of the territory were more hostile to the European intruders than those living further east. The Portuguese were able to exploit this situation as well as the age-old animosity between Timorese groups, by rallying support of the ‘easterners’ to quench uprisings by the ‘westerners’. Especially the people in and around Manatuto, the Galoli, had a certain repute for their allegiance to the Portuguese, and during the Dom Boaventura uprising Galoli ‘second line’ troops fought for the colonials.67

As Dili attracted an increasing number of people from other areas during and after WWII, this also meant increasing competition over limited land in which to settle and also over jobs and commerce in local markets. While Kaladi and Firaku at times simply meant to signify one’s background, arguments and violence between members of the two groups were increasingly common.68

Oppression continues

Two students of the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney who visited Timor in 1948 were of the opinion that the aim of the governor of the time – to rebuild Timor within five years – was within reach, but that it required the use of compulsory labour. They described the system at the time as:

It is recognised that every adult male native is required to work for the administration for one month of each year. During this period he is paid. Each officer in charge of a post estimates the required number of labourers required for the month and instructs each chief to send in a certain number from each area. The chief then chooses those to go. A wealthy native may offer a sum of money for someone to take his place and so escape having to work for the month. Another native who may have offended the chief finds that he is required to work for more than one month of the year whilst a favourite will not be required to work his month. This method is undoubtedly open to abuse ... The work on which these labourers are mostly employed is the construction of buildings and roads. In Dili they load and unload ships and as the wharf had not yet been rebuilt, carry the cargo from the beach to the customs sheds. On some plantations women and children are used whenever possible since they receive lower wages than the men. Children under 14 years of age do not have to be paid but must be fed and clothed.69

Glen Francis was in Timor in 1947 as a member of an Australian War Graves Unit to search for the dead bodies of Australian soldiers. He visited Viqueque in the south-eastern part of Timor during this early post-war period. Sitting on the veranda sipping some wine after enjoying a meal with the administrator, he heard some noise and went to see what it was. He came upon a gang of Timorese;

69 Hill, op. cit., p. 26
employed with sledge hammers breaking boulders two feet in diameter, conveyed to them by fellow-labourers in gangs of six. As they staggered back and forth, two red clothed natives dashed among them with shouts flaying their backs with a short length of rope the thickness of a finger, bringing up red and purple weals, and constricted gasps of pain from the victims. Standing apart from this activity was another native wearing a purple diagonal sash. He held a sprout of birches in his hand. In a moment he darted forward and brought down the flagellum again and again on the backs of the red-clothed men, who themselves had relaxed a moment too long. They arched backward with the pain, then ran amok, their ropes swishing in the air to right and left, and cracking anew upon searing flesh. ‘You don’t find such vigorous labour in Dutch territory, or British, I am sure. The Dutch are soft. They get along at their snail’s pace’, said Ribeiro, a Portuguese army sergeant, who acted as interpreter and guide. ‘How do you acquire these men?’ I asked. ‘Oh, we call for them. The administrator sends a message to the chiefs that he wants a certain number of men. The chiefs select the men who must go. Such as refuse have their names taken and put before the administrator, who then sends out his police to bring them in by force; they are then given a little lesson, and then compelled to work without pay. It is foolish of them to make themselves difficult, is it not? But they seldom do. They are discreet.’

The Australian Consul reported that, west of Dili: “During 1948 most of the able-bodied males from Maubara crossed the border to avoid ‘voluntary’ labour on the construction of a new road. The road was completed by women and children under police guard.”

**Portuguese Timor and the outside world.**

If Portugal, and its colonies, in 1947 and 1948 gave the impression of being sealed off from developments in the rest of the world, this was to change in 1949. On April 4 of that fateful year, foreign ministers from twelve nations – one of them Portugal - established NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO’s first General-Secretary, Great Britain’s Lord Ismay, frankly and famously declared that the aim behind the treaty was to “keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down.” With greater foresight he might also have included China. The formerly neutral Portugal was now militarily tied to the biggest superpower on earth, USA, and its allies of western democracies, although definitely no democracy itself! In August 1949 the Soviet Union got its own atomic bomb – it takes two to tango! – and in October Mao Zedong proclaimed the formation of the People’s Republic of China. One of Mao’s first moves as Chairman of the Republic was to visit Moscow for talks with Joseph Stalin, in an attempt to work out a common strategy against the USA and NATO. The two-month visit in Moscow resulted in a Sino-Soviet treaty, not dissimilar to the North Atlantic treaty, in which the two Communist powers pledged to assist the other if attacked by outside forces. Thus, from the mid-20th century most politics in the world, internal as well as external, in some measure had to take into account the precarious balance of power between NATO, the Soviet Union and China.

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71 Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 7.
73 When the Federal Republic of Germany, more commonly named West Germany, joined NATO in May 1945, this had as an immediate effect the formation of the Warsaw Pact, in which the Soviet Union and seven of its European satellites established a mutual defense organization with the Soviet Union in command.
In the early 1950’s an increasing awareness from the world outside of Portuguese Timor—and vice versa—could be seen, both locally and in Portugal and Indonesia. Some signs of this may have been based on mere rumours, while some undoubtedly were based on actual happenings. In early March 1950, the Portuguese authorities in Dili received reports of landings from a submarine with 80 to 150 Indonesian and Dutch (!) troops. Portuguese troops were flown to the Viqueque and Barique regions, where local chiefs confirmed the existence of an armed group, including about 25 Europeans. In spite of a two week search, the Portuguese, however, could not find a trace of the alleged intruders. A senior Portuguese official admitted to the Australian Consul in Dili that “if foreigners had landed in those districts, they would be hidden by the natives out of resentment against the administrator of Viqueque… notorious for his harsh, if not brutal, administration ... the natives are in a frame of mind to welcome any foreigners who promised improved conditions.”

From 1951 is an article in *The World’s News* regarding rumours of the situation in Timor, as seen from Lisbon’s horizon. In this article, Frank Feldman writes of “tight-lipped Portuguese Government officials, colonial experts and bankers” who assemble in Lisbon’s Banco Nacional Ultramarino to study top-secret cables from Dili. According to this writer, Portugal was at the time waging a ‘secret war’ in Timor, and due to a strict censorship only Portugal’s top officials knew the full facts. According to Feldman, ‘the guerrillas are well supplied with instructions and arms. Reinforcements are regularly sluiced across the border … Timor is the only hot-spot in Portugal’s colonial empire’. As Robert Wesley-Smith, who has this obscure article on file, points out, it is ‘written in a certain time and era, about something hidden or unknown, or untrue’. To me, it seems that it is based on some actual facts, such as the sporadic Timorese uprisings in protest against the forced labour system, plus the rumours of fomenting dissatisfaction among parts of the Timorese population near or across the Indonesian border. Add to that the general distrust and paranoia which accompanies an oppressive censorship and the ‘secret war’ is not a far step away. In Portugal itself, Timor was in 1951 declared to no longer be a colony, but an Overseas Province. The Overseas Organic Law of 27 June 1953 then stipulated that São Tomé and the Timor islands should no longer be subject to the Native Statute. As a result, common law became applicable to the whole population, without legal distinctions between indígenas and não indígenas, a reform which, however, had almost no effect on the welfare of the indigenous people. From now on East Timor had, as an overseas province, its own organs of government. These were the Governor, appointed at the Council of Ministers in Lisbon, and the Council of Government, composed of eleven members, three of whom were members for life.

In mid and late 1953, the outside world again made its presence felt in the Portuguese colony—but this time not in the form of perhaps insubstantial rumours. There were several clashes in the border area, with Indonesian military reportedly firing on Portuguese troops who returned fire. The Portuguese army commander, Major Arnaldo Dionisio Carneiro de Sousa e Meneses, in his reports to the Minister of Defence in Lisbon, requested that the army’s strength in Portuguese Timor be increased from about 900 to 2000.
However, on 3 January 1954, at the request of Governor Serpa Rosa, Major Meneses was recalled from Timor, reportedly on the grounds of being “too militaristic for the political situation on the border”; and that he had gone out of his way “to antagonise the Indonesians with whom at present the country is enjoying reasonably cordial relations”. In May 1954, President Sukarno travelled to Indonesian West Timor. During his visit to the towns of Atapupo and Atambua near the border with Portuguese Timor, Timorese from the Portuguese half of the island allegedly came to see the president and requested him “not to forget those who were still sighing under the colonial yoke of Portugal”.

The Sukarno-chaired Bandung Conference in April 1955 did not in any formal way raise the question of Portuguese Timor, but its final communiqué declared that “colonialism in all its manifestation is an evil which should speedily be brought to an end”. The Indonesian consul in Dili had reportedly recruited three Timorese students to attend the conference. The plans never eventuated, however, “due to tensions between Indonesia and Portuguese Timor”. The Consul told the students that they would be contacted again, but this never occurred.

In October 1956, there was a group, GPKI, Gerakan Penentang/Penghapusan Kolonialisme Indonesia (the Anti-Colonial Movement of Indonesia) established in Jakarta by Indonesian students, with the expressed motive to work for a plebiscite in “Portuguese-occupied Timor.” The group declared itself not to be particularly directed against Portuguese colonialism in Timor, but “against any form of colonialism which can still be found within or bordering the Indonesian archipelago.” In response to the movement’s declaration, an Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman bluntly stated that “Indonesia has no territorial claims but its claim to West Irian.” The Australian Embassy in Jakarta reported, however, that “the existence of the group has excited the Portuguese Legation considerably”. In the end, nothing much came out of this group; and they were not heard of again.

Also in 1956, the Portuguese Under-Secretary of State for Overseas Affairs, Carlos Abecassis, left Dili appalled by what he had seen during his visit to Timor. Before his departure he issued instructions to the Governor to correct abuses and social injustices, including the immediate abolition of corporal punishment. This appears to have been to no avail. It also appears with the wisdom of hindsight that from this period all that was needed was someone to put a match to the prevailing discontent and Portuguese Timor would flare up in a rebellion, just like it did in 1912.

The Viqueque rebellion

Portuguese colonisation resulted in the development of three distinct ethnic societies apart from the ruling Portuguese - native Timorese society, Mestizo and educated Timorese society, and a small Chinese society. These societies had little effective social interaction between them.

82 Ibid, p. 16.
85 The Portuguese Bureau of Statistics reported the population by ethnic group in 1970 as consisting of 1,463 Portuguese (0.2 % of the population, 6,120 Chinese (1.0 %), 1,939 Mestizos (0.3 %), 42 Indians and 22 Negroes. The Timorese were 599, 891 (Ranck, op. cit., p. 63).
86 Thatcher, op. cit., p. 47.
The life of the great majority, the native Timorese, was led virtually in isolation of all other groups, partly for geographical and cultural reasons within Timor, but also because it was the policy of the Portuguese colonial administration to keep Timor free from outside influences. In this the Portuguese were not altogether successful, as in 1959 a small number of Indonesian refugees instigated an uprising against the colonial power which by some is seen as a watershed in East Timor’s history in that it forced the Portuguese to give more attention to the social and economic conditions of the non-elite Timorese. It also laid the foundations for what was to become APODETI (see below), as families involved in this rebellion were among those which later supported the party which favoured integration with Indonesia.

In 1959 there was a rebellion in the Viqueque district in the eastern part of the territory. Personal accounts given to Patricia Thatcher and Justino Guterres from members of Timorese families involved in the rebellion, claimed that it was influenced by ideas learned from fourteen Indonesians who had been granted refugee status in East Timor and resettled in the Baucau and Viqueque areas. These refugees had fled from the unsuccessful Permesta rebellion (more of this in the next chapter) in Sulawesi, and arrived in a boat laden with guns and ammunition in Oecusse on 27 March 1958. The question of why the Indonesians began to intrigue with Timorese opponents of the Portuguese colonial regime is still a matter of dispute, but that the fugitives from Indonesia succeeded in exploiting existing discontent with the local administration is beyond doubt.

In Viqueque, where four of them settled, they befriended José Manuel Duarte, a mestizo Timorese civil servant in the Weather Service, and Amaro Loyola Jordão de Araújo, a Timorese retired treasury employee who had major complaints against the colonial administration. Gradually, this small group of discontented men grew, and also came to include some civil servants in Dili. One of these, Luis “Xina” da Costa Rêgo, a young Chinese-Timorese driver for the Agriculture Department visited the Viqueque area in February 1959, and managed to find allies among “minor royalty”. One of these was António da Costa Soares, known as ‘António Metan’ who, like many others, was angry about alleged corruption at the subdistrict post of Uato-Lari.

They alleged Caiero Rodrigues (subdistrict head) was taking a huge share of the salaries paid to the posto by the Australian firm Timor Oil, which was surveying for petroleum at Aliambata. This cell soon came under the leadership of Gerson Pello, one of the Indonesian exiles. By March thirty-four men were prepared to fight the Portuguese. However, in late May, an angry wife of one of the principal conspirators denounced her husband’s activities to Portuguese officials in Baucau. The Dili police wasted little time, detaining the local ring leaders on 1 June 1959. As the Portuguese planned to arrest the conspirators in the Viqueque area on June 6, Antonio Metan learned about this and warned the others. At this point the armed rebellion began.

Bitter fighting took place in the Ossu, Viqueque and Uato-Lari areas, where the Portuguese military cynically used the second-line troops of neighbouring areas that were traditionally hostile to the rebel Timorese. The rebellion was crushed, with a high number of deaths.

87 Thatcher, op. cit., p. 4.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid, p. 31.
93 Ibid.
When the rebels finally decided to give themselves up to the authorities in Uato-Lari and Uato-Carbau they were tied and beaten with rifle butts and wooden sticks. Two of them died from the beatings. Many others were interrogated and shot. Some of the rebels were sent to Dili for further interrogation, which saved their lives. In the villages of Uato-Lari and Uato-Carbau the people’s property was confiscated and the houses were burnt down. Over 500 were killed, including old people and infants. Sixty-eight Timorese were exiled to Mozambique, Angola and Lisbon. The fourteen Indonesians were expelled. Most of the Timorese imprisoned in the African colonies served three years or less in jail there. Upon release they were not given much assistance to return to Timor, but over the years some found their way back. For many Timorese the returnees were heroes. While in Angola or Mozambique, many of them witnessed the unfolding of one of the last colonial struggles in Africa, exposing them to anti-colonial ideas which had not yet reached isolated Portuguese Timor.

A detailed description of the social conditions which led to the uprising (that does not mention the Indonesians’ role) is given in a seven-page ‘Memorandum’ authored by Amaro Loyola Jordão de Araújo, one of the rebels. The unpublished ‘Memorandum’ was presented to the author by Araújo’s son in Melbourne, May 1995. The booklet gives a vivid description of the appalling social conditions in the Viqueque area that led to the uprising (Glen Francis’ above-mentioned article ‘Slavery in Timor’ is about this area). According to the author, Viqueque had not had tap water since the Japanese left the town. The town was in a state of neglect and misery, with no lights and no medical care. Many hundreds of children did not receive any schooling. Forced and unpaid labour in town or for the suco chiefs took time from the wage earners, who were neither able to feed their families nor to pay the head tax. The natives were also forced by the authorities to sell their livestock to a Chinese businessman at a very low price.

When Timor Oil started to look for oil in Aliambata in the Viqueque area (more on this later) the local administration was requested by the company to provide workers at the monthly salary of three hundred patacas for skilled labourers, and ninety patacas for unskilled labourers. The request was accepted, but the wages were cut down by the local authorities to, respectively, ninety and twenty-one patacas. The locals had to accept this under threat of being whipped and jailed if they did not abide.

The 1959 Viqueque uprising pre-dated by nearly two years the MPLA’s attack on the prisons in Luanda, Angola, generally regarded as the first armed uprising against Portuguese colonialism since the coming of the Salazar regime. However, the uprising in Timor in 1959 and the rebellion in Angola in 1961 were both the results of similar conditions in two different parts of the world but within the same colonial system.

Xanana Gusmão, later gerilla leader and the first Prime Minister of independent East Timor in 2002, has recalled how the returnees from Angola installed in his mind a new understanding of what had happened in 1959. The uprising had resulted in an increase of Portuguese military presence, compulsory military service for the Timorese and the

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94 Amaro Loyola Jordão de Araújo et al. Memorandum. Place and date of printing unknown.
96 Gunter, op. cit., p. 34.
97 When the Under Secretary of State for Overseas Territories visited Timor in 1956 he prohibited the use of palmitori and chicote (whipping), because this corporal punishment had been against the law for many years in Portugal. As soon as this government member returned to Portugal the abuse continued.
98 Hill, op. cit., p. 62.
99 1961 was also the year of the Indian takeover of Goa, showing Portugal’s inability to defend their colonies effectively against armed forces larger than tribal uprisings.
appearance of PIDE (Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado), the secret police. Later in this story we shall see how both pro-independence and pro-Indonesian groups attempt to affiliate themselves with the memory of the uprising, portraying themselves as bearing the torch that had been set alight in 1959.

**Mao Klao and the URT-D.**

Less well-known, and certainly less spectacular, than the 1959 uprising are the various manifestations of anti-colonial activity by individuals or groups during the early part of the 1960’s; what Ernest Chamberlain labels “faltering steps”. In 1960, a group appeared in Jakarta calling itself the “Friends of Timor-Dilly”. Its manifesto stated that “Timor-Dilly is for Timordillians” and not for “Portuguese robbers”. In that same year, a “Liberation Bureau” of the “Union of the Republic of Timor-Dilly” (URT-D) was founded in Jakarta, under the auspices of the All-Malay Races Union. The first public statement emanating from this group was distributed in early March 1961 to local newspapers in Jakarta and also to foreign news representatives. The announcement, signed by General Chairman Mao Klao, urged the people of Portuguese Timor to revolt. The Portuguese legation in Jakarta tried, according to the Australian embassy, in vain to find somebody at the address given in the statement, a building situated in the Jakarta slum. As for the All-Malay Race Union, The Australian and British embassies in Jakarta reported that this organisation “is virtually non-existent, and is the creation of one man with a small circle of associates”.

However, the elusive Mao Klao did indeed exist. He was a man with the decidedly Muslim name Muhammed Salah Akbar Balikh, who was born (with the Timorese birth name Mao Klao) in the small village of Morai, some 65 kilometres west of Dili, 1938. According to Balikh (whom Ernest Chamberlain talked to in Dili in 2004) his grandfather was Dom Rei Preto, a liurai who had been connected with the Dom Boaventura uprising in 1912. Balikh had been raised on the nearby Indonesian islands of Alor and Pulau Pantar. In 1958 he travelled to Jakarta, where he attended secondary school. On 5 July 1959; shortly after the violent crushing of the Viqueque rebellion, he attended a rally in Jakarta in which President Sukarno called for the liberation of oppressed peoples. He came then as a member of the “Delegation of Portuguese-Colonised Timorese.” This was just after the violent crushing of the Viqueque rebellion. Balikh claims that in early 1961 he travelled to Kupang, the capital of Dutch West Timor, and from there to Atambua, near the border to Portuguese Timor. In Atambua he stayed with an elder relative, who was involved in the All-Malay Race Union. Together they organised a meeting outside of Batugade, just across the border in Portuguese Timor, on 9 April 1961. Balikh held a speech there, where he declared the independence of Portuguese Timor and raised a flag to mark the occasion. The rumours reached New York some six months later; UN Document A/AC. 108/L.13, of 3 December 1962, mentions that a group called the Committee for the Liberation of the Republic of Timor is known to exist and has its headquarters in Indonesia.

Two years later, on 14 April 1963, the URT-D issued an announcement, declaring that a 12-member cabinet had been formed at Batugade. Three of the fourteen had Islamic/Malay names, and the document included some Islamic phrases, such as "In the name of Allah the most Beneficient and Merciful”, “may Allah bestow his blessings...”, and “May Allah accept

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102 Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 118.
It! Amen”\footnote{103}. The URT-D even issued a bank note, a 1000 pataca note of the Uni Republic Timor.\footnote{104} It is, however, unclear whether more than one was made. In Portuguese Timor, the pataca had been replaced as currency by the Portuguese escudo in 1959.\footnote{105}

Later in 1963, the URT-D again issued an announcement, this time listing composition of its 25-member Military Council – which it claimed had been formed in Batugade in June 1963. The Military Council was headed by President A. Mao Klao as its general Chairman. Again Islamic phrases were included.\footnote{106} It is very unclear how substantial this claim was. More substantial is the report that in May 1964, eight armed Indonesians landed in the Lautem area, on the north-east coast of Portuguese Timor. According to the Portuguese authorities they were bringing in “subversive literature” and had “been sent to carry out subversive acts.”\footnote{107} The Portuguese authorities captured the eight suspects, causing the Indonesian consul in Dili to react aggressively, “charging that Indonesians had been ill-treated and demanding that they be given into his custody pending repatriation.” The Indonesians were repatriated as quickly as possible. The Australian report (by former Consul in Dili, late August 1964) noted: “The new Indonesian Consul is also causing the Portuguese some anxiety … has actively been seeking contact with Timorese suspected of disloyalty. The Governor has recently ordered that he be kept under closer surveillance.”\footnote{108}

The frosty relations between Portugal and Indonesia went from bad to worse in February 1965, when Indonesia broke off all diplomatic relations. This was as a result of a resolution adopted at the Cairo Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries the year before, which called for all member countries to do precisely that.\footnote{109} In the same month, there were rumours in Dili of “unrest among the Uato-Lari tribes” including “blood-letting ceremonies and other gatherings normally not permitted by the authorities”. The Governor, the military commander and the head of the civil administration made a hastily organised visit to the region and the reported unrest abated.\footnote{110}

In May 1965, the Central presidium of the URT-D produced a Constitution which declared the “craving” of the URT-D and the Timorese people for a “full independence”, and that “She” (Timor) is never prone to be annexed by any neighbouring country.\footnote{111} It also stated that Timor is “a Malay country belonging to the Malay-Melanesian group of islands … The Union of Timor Republic supports resolutely the idea of All Malay Race Union, and will put herself as its first member.”\footnote{112} Intrigued by this and other similar statements, the Australian Consul in Dili visited Batugade in early July 1965, to see the place “where the Central presidium of the United Republic of Timor are supposed to have their emergency headquarters”.

The Consul reported that “the village of Batugade has virtually been abandoned by the Portuguese who have encouraged the Timorese to move inland away from the border area. Many small holdings are returning to their natural state, most of the village huts are empty and falling down, the church is no longer used, markets are not permitted and the few inhabitants that remain are under the surveillance of second line Portuguese troops stationed
in the old fort … under the circumstances I do not think that the Headquarters of the Republic of United Timor are actively operating at Batugade, except by name”.113

Even so, all was not well in Portuguese Timor. About the same time as the Australian ambassador tried in vain to find any sign of Mao Klao’s alleged organisation in Batugade, eight men suspected of plotting to “assassinate the Governor and perhaps other senior officials with hand grenades” were arrested – two in Dili and six in the border area attempting to escape into Indonesia. The three principal conspirators reportedly had close relatives connected with the 1959 rebellion.114

During his Independence Day speech in Jakarta on 17 August 1965, President Sukarno referred to Portuguese Timor, stating that Indonesia “continues actively to support the independence struggles of the peoples of Portuguese Timor.” The Australian Department of External Affairs commented: “This is the first occasion, as far as we know, on which President Sukarno himself has publicly spoken of Timor in this way”.115

A few weeks later on 8 September 1965, the URT-D issued a statement entitled “Resolutions”, welcoming Sukarno’s speech, which had been applauded by the URT-D leadership holding meetings in Batugade in the period 1-7 September.116 But then came the attempted coup of 30 September and the following massacres of up to one million people (cf. Ch. 8). Sukarno disappeared and was followed by Suharto, and Portuguese Timor seemingly faded out of interest of the new regime in Jakarta – at least temporarily. It seems that the URT-D also faded away, after a few letters to the New Zealand and Australian embassies in Jakarta – in December 1966 and April 1967, respectively – where both countries were urged to sponsor a “Conference of Oceania” to be held in Western Samoa, with the aim of forming an “Ocean Alliance”. Suggested principal attendees at the proposed conference would be West Samoa, Tonga, Nauru, Papua, New Zealand and the Timor Union Republic – but notably not Indonesia.

The New Zealand legation sought information on the URT-D from the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, but was told by its Director General of its Political Affairs Division that she had not been aware of URT-D.117 And with that the URT-D vanished into history. As far as this writer has been able to ascertain, it had no connections with the later groupings that began to formulate ways to achieve independence from Portugal during the early 1970’s.118

113 Ibid, p. 113. Second line troops consisted entirely of East Timorese soldiers, largely ordered to do tasks that the European/Portuguese military were unwilling to do, such as opening and maintaining bush tracks, and building and manning military outposts in rugged and potentially dangerous border areas. They also did so for a far lesser pay than that of the Portuguese colonial army (J. Chrys Chrystello, East Timor: The Secret File 1973-1975, 1999, p. 28.) E Books Brasil: www.ebooksbrasil.org/adobebook/timore.pdf
114 Ibid, p. 70.
115 Ibid.
118 Contemporary with the tragic events in the Viqueque district and the mostly unnoticed rise and fall of Mao Klao was the so called Rabuta religious movement and its vague connections with Indonesia. Rabuta was started during W.W.II on Ataúro island, where it was introduced by Franz and Juliana Braz. Franz was born in Ataúro, but had spent his youth on the Dutch/Indonesian island of Alor (where Mao Klao was partly raised). He married there and returned to Ataúro in the early forties, with his wife Juliana. Rabuta’s syncretism, based on Protestantism, expanded quickly on Ataúro. In 1961, the movement consisted of 1,350 adherents in Ataúro, out of a total population of 3,397. Rabuta followers received visits by representatives of Indonesian authorities on two occasions, in December 1957, and in October 1959. In March 1961, Ataúro fishermen saw four Indonesian warships on an official visit in Dili harbour. This led to a belief on Ataúro that liberation from the Portuguese was at hand. According to Barros Duare, the Rabuta movement had a religious and a political goal, and the political goal was integration with Indonesia. Jorge Barros Duare ‘O Fenómeno dos Movimentos Nativistas.’ In Garcia de Orta, Sér. Anthropobiol, Vol. 5, No. 1-2, 1987/1988, pp. 46-49. Lisboa: Garcia de Orta.
Infrastructure and economy - slow improvements.

In Dili, the reconstruction after the war opened new opportunities. It was a slow process, but in the mid-1960s a few kilometres of roads were paved, municipal buildings were erected and port facilities were improved. In 1966 Portugal established a fortnightly flight between Darwin in Australia and Baucau, the second largest town in Portuguese Timor. Before that, international communications consisted of small Dutch KPM ships which plied between Dili and Singapore about once every two months, and twice a year a ship from Lisbon arrived. Inside Portuguese Timor, to compensate for the insufficient road system, there were six airstrips serving Transportes Aereos do Timor, (TAT), which transported 15,000 passengers in 1964 and 20,000 in 1974.

During the early 1970s government spending increased considerably from US$1,251,622 in 1972 to $5,075,189 in 1973 (of which only $106,136 was generated in Timor). Most of this increase in government spending was devoted to building roads, to improve the airport at Baucau, and on infrastructure designed to attract tourists and foreign investment. In 1973 there were 2,371 km of roads linking all the administrative posts, but 1,540 km were passable only in the dry season. The only five km of paved road were in Dili. The population of Dili had risen from the war-time figure of 5,000 to 29,000 in 1973.

Portuguese Timor was relatively well-served with telephones primarily on official levels. A telephone exchange installed in Dili in 1972 expanded the territory’s communications with Indonesia and Australia. In the interior, fifty-eight telephone stations linked all the Chefs do Posto with their concelho headquarters and these, in turn, with Dili.

The medical system was next to non-existent, and the little there was served mainly the Portuguese, and even they often chose to go to Darwin when ill, having little trust in their own system. The only hospital in the territory was the Dr Carvalho Central Hospital in Dili, and there was only one surgeon and one dentist providing specialist care as late as 1974. Venereal diseases were widespread, with ca 95000 reported cases of gonnorhoea in 1973 (in a population of just over 600,000). Life expectancy among the native East Timorese was as low as 35 years, with malaria, pneumonia and tuberculosis taking high tolls. Malnution led to an extremely high rate of infant mortality, between 50 and 75 % per year.

Only very few people had visited Timor as tourists in the 1950s and 1960s, but in the early 1970’s small aircraft flying between Darwin and Baucau increased the number of visitors. In 1968 Portuguese Timor had 817 visitors from Australia, and more than 3,000 came in 1974. Most of these were young budget travellers who used the Darwin-Baucau flight as the first step on their way to Bali and other places in Asia. Others were newlyweds from Darwin, where Portuguese Timor was marketed as a suitably romantic place for a honeymoon.

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119 Dunn, op. cit., p. 31.
120 Telkamp, op. cit., p. 77.
121 Hill, op. cit., p. 39.
122 Ranck, op. cit., p. 92.
123 Hill, op. cit., p. 40.
124 Nicol, op. cit., p. 25.
126 One of the more serious adventure travellers in 1974 was Elaine Briere, a young Canadian woman who took photographs of great merit and beauty of a world that within a year would be shattered by brutal violence. Leaving conventions behind, Briere ‘captured the human essence of East Timor’, in a series of photographs that later were to surface as political art in the campaigns of international support groups. Jeet Heer, ‘Elaine Briere’s East Timor Testimony’, National Post. Toronto: Postmedia Network, June 17, 2004.
Some Australian and Japanese companies began to see a potential for tourism in the highly scenic Portuguese Timor. Theiss, an Australian company, established a Lisbon registered subsidiary for its joint venture with the Japanese company Daiko Kanko for a $A100 million tourist complex near the Baucau airport.\textsuperscript{128} However, this was never to be. Tourism never became a significant source of income for Portuguese Timor. Most of the young travellers stayed at the ‘Hippie Hilton’, a simple brick and corrugated iron structure on the beach in Dili, where they paid one dollar for a week’s stay, before continuing to Bali.

There had been some hopes from Australian officialdom that it would be possible to initiate co-operation between the two territories in areas such as trade and mutual defence following WWII, primarily as a means to ensure that Timor would not once again be used by hostile forces to launch attacks on Australia. Enthusiasm for such schemes seems to have waned rather quickly. Australia appointed a consul to Portuguese Timor in January 1946, but by June 1950 his successor was withdrawn. The main reason for this, apart from disappointment with the lack of development in Timor, was the altered geo-political situation, where Japan instead of being a latent enemy now was a potential ally of the U.S. (and thereby also of Australia) in the Cold War. The consulate was re-opened in early 1951, but from Australia’s point of view Portuguese Timor was by then a backwater of not much significance\textsuperscript{129}, and by August 1971 the consulate was closed for good. This was a measure which in all likelihood had a bearing on events in the political arena in the next few years.\textsuperscript{130}

Coffee continued to be the main source of income. In 1973 coffee export accounted for ninety per cent of total exports.\textsuperscript{131} Forty per cent of the coffee export was supplied by the Portuguese state-owned SAPT. By April 1974 an estimated ninety-five per cent of all business in East Timor was controlled by the Chinese. They owned twenty-three of East Timor’s import-export firms, they also dominated the retail trade, owning some three hundred shops. Most of their earnings were remitted to Taiwan, rather than reinvested in Timor.\textsuperscript{132}

There was not much in the way of industrial production in Portuguese Timor. There were two small soap factories, one in Dili and the other in Baucau, plus a soft drink plant in Lecidere. Coffee was roasted in Dili by SAPT. There were brick factories in Dili and Fatumeta, and alcohol-distilleries in Laivai and Maubara. All of these were small-scale operations.\textsuperscript{133}

Practically all industrial (cheap) consumer goods, materials related to the development efforts, and an increasing amount of foodstuffs had to be imported. This caused a negative balance of trade, which was compensated for by subsidies from Lisbon. In 1968 these subsidies amounted to 117 million escudos.\textsuperscript{134}

Since the Portuguese first arrived on the island there had been rumours of vast deposits of gold and copper, but only small quantities were found. In January 1972 the Australian company Broken Hill Proprietary, BHP, was granted a thirty year concession over a 950 square mile area for exploration and mining of all minerals except radio-active minerals, petroleum and diamonds.

\textsuperscript{128} Nicol, op. cit., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{129} Of more than passing significance, however, was that the consul between 1962-1964 was James Dunn, author of \textit{Timor: A People Betrayed}, oft-quoted in this book.
\textsuperscript{130} Geoffrey Gunn, \textit{A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor}. Manila & Sydney: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1994, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{131} Dunn, op. cit., p. 47.
\textsuperscript{132} It has to be noted that although the Chinese community was viewed with disdain and distrust by many Timorese, they were never subjected to acts of plundering, fire bombings or mass violence, such as frequently occurred in Indonesia (J. Chrys Chrystello, \textit{East Timor: The Secret File 1973-1975}, p. 21. Date unknown. E Books Brasil: \texttt{www.ebooksbrasil.org/adobebook/timore.pdf})
\textsuperscript{133} Justino Gutieres, interview with the author, Canberra, April 1995
\textsuperscript{134} Telkamp, op. cit., p. 80.
For its Timor operation BHP was required to set up a subsidiary registered in Lisbon and to pay fifty per cent of its net profits to the Portuguese administration in Timor. The explorations were terminated due to the unstable political situation in 1974.

**Oil-explorations in Portuguese Timor – a historical background**

Oil-explorations in Portuguese Timor and neighbouring areas deserve to be presented in some depth and detail, since the expected resources under the Timor Sea came to influence, if not determine, political decisions of great importance during the period of Portuguese decolonization. The existence of oil and gas in Timor has long been known. Audley-Charles has listed more than thirty natural seepages of oil and gas in East Timor, most of them on the southern part of the island. This oil has traditionally been used by the Timorese for illumination. Geologically, the setting of Timor is between the Sahul shelf of Australia and the Sunda shelf of Southeast Asia. Timor island is the largest of the Banda Arc, which comprises the islands of Roti, Timor, Leti, Tanimbar, Kai, Ceram, Buru and Buton. Between the Banda Arc and the Australian Sahul Shelf is a deep marine trough, the Timor Trough.

The first non-Portuguese or non-Timorese to acquire knowledge of the oil seepages seems to have been a Captain Helms, who commanded a steamer which stopped at Dili on the route between Sydney and the East. Captain Helms made some attempts at finding the origin of the oil, and in 1902 a company was formed in Sydney in order to carry out explorations. The company obtained four or five prospecting concessions from the Portuguese authorities in Dili, and commenced the drilling, initially in order to get a well of drinking water for the drilling camp. At a depth of only six to eight feet the well was filled with a mixture of petroleum oil and water. The explorations lasted for seven or eight years, but did not have any tangible results.

However, rumours of the amateurish explorations leaked out, and investors became interested. A new company, Timor Petroleum Concessions Limited, was formed, and this time some well-known geologists were consulted. In September 1911, three representatives of the company and Mr Foxall, a geologist from the University of Sydney, travelled to Dili. In Mr. Foxall’s report he writes that ‘there is every indication that this field will prove as important as the other East Indian fields. The concessions are all situated in favourable positions, and commercial results are to be looked for in every case.’

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135 Hill, op. cit., p. 39.
138 The reader who remembers that Timor is one of the Lesser Sunda Islands remembers perfectly well. The Banda Arc is a geological term, while the Lesser Sunda Islands is a geographical name.
The manager of Timor Petroleum Concessions, Mr Alfred Warren, in a report signed 1 February 1912, gave the opinion that ‘there appears to be every indication of tremendous oil deposits on the island, but it will be necessary to purchase a heavier plant, capable of getting down to at least 2,000 feet.’ In 1913-14 a boring rig was erected, with a capacity for boring to a depth of 3,000 feet. At 320 feet a gusher was struck, which threw up tools and oil over an acre of surrounding land. Just before the main oil supply was expected to be reached, the boring rod broke. The First World War had broken out, and all shipping between Australia and Portuguese Timor had ceased, so it was impossible to repair the rod.

A reconstruction of the company resulted in the formation of Timor Oil Limited. In 1916 Timor Oil hired B.K. Stroud, ‘an American oil expert of high repute’ associated with the Standard Oil Company of America, to inspect the company’s leases and concessions. On 3 July 1917 Stroud submitted a report to the directors of Timor Oil, in which he pointed out that ‘Timor is the one available place on which to prospect, with any hope of success, in an area covering the whole of Australasia and the Dutch East Indies.’ Mr Stroud listed the necessary improvements which would have to be made after oil was struck and proved to be of commercial value, and estimated the cost would be £600,000 to £750,000.

Stroud was authorised to act as an agent for the company to dispose of the company’s property on a thirty year lease, and a firm of Councillors-at-law in New York was appointed to represent the company. However, the USA got involved in the First World War before Stroud reached New York, and the resulting prohibition of the investment or transfer of American capital outside the USA put an end to Stroud’s activities regarding Timor Oil.

After W.W.I Timor Oil reached an agreement with representatives of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for a six month option. Each party was to have a half interest in the property. The experts of the Anglo-Persian company were impressed by what they saw in Timor, and concluded, in a report dated 23 September 1920, that ‘the properties are certainly worthy of further investigation by drilling and show promise of developing into successful and payable oil fields.’ Another positive factor mentioned was that ‘there are no harassing labour regulations to contend with.’

However, the London-held negotiations between Timor Oil and the Anglo-Persian Company ran into obstacles, and came to a deadlock. At the same time, the Timor Oil agent in Dili who applied to the Portuguese governor for the leases was informed that this had to be done in Lisbon. Timor Oil’s representative to the negotiations in London, Mr. Manders, then went to Lisbon where he met with the Minister for Colonies. The minister informed Manders that he had given no such instructions to the governor in Dili as to applications for leases having to be made in Lisbon. The applications had to be made in Dili, not in Lisbon. The Timor Oil directors then decided that there was ‘too much shilly-shallying’, and they gave the Anglo-Persian company an ultimatum to complete the agreement within a specified time. This time elapsed, and Timor Oil cancelled the option agreement.

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141 In an article written for the Batavia-published Sluyter’s Monthly in February 1923, the Dutch captain of the K.P.M. (Royal Steam Company) shipping line wrote that according to reports that may be considered as dependable there is oil in the territory of Portuguese Timor ‘but who is going to put sink money there in view of the broken down Portuguese government? The law is applied there in such an arbitrary way and so often to gratify the worst self-interest, that a prospective investor is soon scared away.’ H. O. Bron, ‘Where Portuguese and Dutch Rub Elbows.’ In Sluyter’s Monthly, 4 February 1923, pp. 99-102. Batavia).
The source for the above history of early oil explorations is a report issued by Timor Oil Limited (1932), which in its conclusion states that 'experience has merely served to strengthen the opinion that beneath the island of Timor a tremendous field exists with a wealth of oil waiting to be tapped.' Thus, in the 1930s there was a keen interest outside of Timor for the exploration of its oil-potentials, and an established awareness of East Timor in the oil businesses of various countries. The Belgian Serge F. Wittouck carried out further explorations of Portuguese Timor between April 1936 and June 1937 on behalf of the Allied Mining Company. This resulted, among other things, in the construction of a geological map, and a report by Wittouck stating that ‘the study of oil possibilities of Portuguese Timor proved their commercial value, and justified further drilling’.

It also resulted in complex political manoeuvring. In 1937 Mr Henry Fitzmaurice, the United Kingdom Consul-General in Batavia, warned Australia and England of an impending Japanese purchase of a large company in Portuguese Timor and of Nankō’s (cf. section 7.1.) intention to establish a Japanese-Portuguese concern. Nankō was anxious to develop the Timorese oil fields, and in particular to take over concessions held by Mr. Staughton of Timor Oil, which were about to lapse by default. Others were also trying to take over his concessions, notably the Belgian financier Serge F. Wittouck. If he succeeded in obtaining Staughton’s concessions, it was considered by the British Consul-General in Batavia as highly likely that he would later sell out to the Japanese.

To frustrate any such deal the Australian Government backed the Australian Oil Search Company to take over Staughton’s concessions. In October 1939, despite the Australian Government’s inducement to continue, Oil Search abandoned prospecting for Timorese oil. The Australian Government soon found another company which was willing to take over the project. The Oil Concessions Company received the same strong government backing, and it immediately set up the Companhia Ultramarina de Petroleo, posing as a Portuguese company, and under this name it pursued oil prospecting activities. Nankō was trying to link up with the Companhia, unaware that it was an Australian company. The oil concessions were finally granted and signed formally on a government basis between Portugal and Australia on 22 November 1939. It provoked a strong reaction from the Japanese Minister at Lisbon, saying that ‘Portugal (has) under British pressure ruthlessly over ridden existing rights of Belgian capital ...’. W.W. II and the Japanese occupation of Timor completely halted any further explorations.

142 Timor Oil Limited, Petroleum Oil, Island of Timor. The History of Oil Exploration in the Island of Timor prepared from the records of various companies in New South Wales (Australia), together with several Expert’s Reports made in connection herewith. Sydney: Marchant & Co. 1932.
143 Wittouck, op. cit., p. 349.
144 Frei, op. cit., p. 153.
After W.W.II the Swiss geologists Escher and Grunau carried out geological reconnaissance work in East Timor in 1947 and 1948 on behalf of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group, and R. Gageonnet and M. Lemoine made a reconnaissance of Portuguese Timor for the Portuguese Government in 1955. In 1957 Timor Oil reactivated the explorations of their concessions. There was a well drilled to 1355 metres at Aliambata (the low wages accorded to the workers here were, as we have seen, one of many reasons behind the rebellion of 1959). Other wells were also drilled; two in Ossulari, six in Matai, one each in Caro Ulo and Ranuc, and two in Betano. These drillings were a sign of a more serious approach than merely drilling where there was seepage of oil. The sites were chosen on the basis of surface geology, gravity surveys, field mapping and air photographs (Crostella and Powell 1975:18).

Geological fieldwork for Timor Oil was carried out by Freytag in 1958 and by Audley-Charles in 1959-61, while at the same time the drilling of exploratory wells continued. During the 1960s activities again came to a halt, and Timor Oil’s equipment was mostly idle. There appears to have been some official dissatisfaction on the part of the Portuguese regarding the low level of Timor Oil’s operations. This dissatisfaction, however, must also have been low-level, because Alex Dodson, the chairman of directors of Timor Oil, was appointed Portuguese Honorary Consul in Melbourne. The affairs of the Consulate were conducted out of the suite of offices occupied by Timor Oil and, later, International Oil.

There will be reason to return to this link between East Timor and Australian oil companies later.

The Portuguese, though expressing dissatisfaction about the lack of action on the part of Timor Oil, did nothing themselves. In the Programme for the Overseas Territories, included in the Second Six Year National Development Plan 1959-1964, the entries for cartography, geographical survey, soil survey and mining all show a planned investment of nil escudos for Timor.

Enter Nicholas Boutakoff. Born in Washington as the son of a Russian diplomat, he became a British citizen in 1943 and subsequently moved to Australia where he joined the Victorian Geological Society. Noting similarities between certain geological features in Western Australia and those of the Timor area he became confident that oil was to be found off the Timor coast. Boutakoff joined Melbourne-based Woodside Oil in 1962, and in November of that year Woodside and its subsidiary Mid-Eastern Oil applied for a petroleum exploration permit to allow or exploration in the Timor Sea. In 1963, inspired by a Boutakoff penned report, the Woodside venture was accompanied by Shell and Burmah Oil. By 1965 the sea between Australia and Timor was “a patchwork of permits”, now including also those of the Atlantic Richfield Company of America (ARCO), the Societé National des Pétroles d’Aquitaine and the already mentioned Timor Oil.
Now it is high time for a lifting of our eyes and a broadening of our horizons in order to appreciate the outburst of oil exploration activities which took place in Indonesia during the latter part of the 1960s. The period of 1965-66 has been described by Ooi Jin Bee as a watershede in the history of the Indonesian oil industry. It was a period of uncertainty, with the Sukarno era being replaced by the regime of Suharto, and in 1966 oil companies around the world changed their focus from onshore to offshore drilling. Advances in technology now made it possible to drill in the continental shelves, and in Indonesia the offshore geological indications were most promising. Still, the Indonesian output of crude oil fell from 177 million barrels in 1965 to 170 million barrels in 1966. The foreign oil companies were simply hesitating to act before they felt sure that the new regime would prove to be cooperative with foreign companies.

They soon found that the Suharto regime had a very favourable view regarding foreign investments. Production-sharing contracts were signed, in which the foreign oil companies and the Indonesian state company Pertamina shared the produced oil. Between 1966-68 thirteen foreign oil companies reached this kind of agreement. These companies were mainly drilling offshore. The first successful strike, in February 1969, was made by the Sinclair Exploration Company in the Java Sea. By the end of 1970 Pertamina had concluded thirty production-sharing contracts with foreign oil companies, and by 1974 most of Indonesia’s offshore areas had been contracted out. By that year offshore production had increased to eighteen per cent of the total Indonesian output of oil.

The Portuguese Government failed to act or cash in on the possibilities pointed out by the Indonesian example. On 27 November 1967 there was a new decree, authorised by the Ministerio do Ultramar, giving the Companhia de Petroleo de Timor exclusive rights to handle concessions in Timor. In reality nothing much happened. Boutakoff wrote that previous drilling in East Timor was of only historical interest, that ‘everything belongs to the future in this respect’.

Boutakoff refers to the explorations in Indonesia, and concludes that Timor has excellent potential for commercial discoveries of oil, but that seismic methods need to be used. This was in fact beginning to happen, even if Portugal was not directly involved. In 1967 a 365 kilometre marine sparker survey was conducted along the southern coast of Portuguese Timor, on behalf of Timor Oil. In 1968 another Australian company, International Oil, used seismic survey methods in an offshore survey of an area off Indonesian Timor and other areas in the Lesser Sunda Islands. In 1970 a marine seismic survey was made in six separate areas; Aliambata, Beaco, Suai, Belu, Bena and Savu. Also in 1970, four reconnaissance lines totalling eighty-seven kilometres were recorded in Indonesian Timor. In 1971 the Flamingo No.1 well, sunk in the area later to be called Timor Gap, encountered good shows of oil and gas. 1972 is the year in which new oil companies appear on the scene, apparently as a result of the surveys already carried out in East Timor, and very likely also because of the success of offshore drilling in Indonesia.

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158 Crostella and Powell, op. cit., p. 19.
Timor Oil made farm-out agreements with Australian Amalgamated Petroleum and International Oil, which hitherto had been operating in Indonesian Timor. In these two companies, an Australian based British company, Woodside-Burmah Oil Ltd, had acquired a majority holding. The farm-out agreement resulted in the drilling of two wells in the Betano area on the south coast, which yielded significant traces of low-sulphur content oil. However, the interest was concentrated on the offshore areas. This interest was also shown at the top level of politics. Australia and Indonesia initialled talks on continental shelf exploration agreements in 1971, and in 1972 for the Timor and Arafura Sea areas. Australia’s position was that the natural dividing line is the southern edge of the Timor Trough, i.e. closer to Timor than to Australia, while Indonesia claimed that the boundary should be the line of equidistance between Timor and Australia. The Australians argued that there are two distinct continental shelves, the Australian, stretching for more than 320 km to the southern edge of the Timor Trough, and the shelf of Indonesia/East Timor with an average width of about nineteen km. A compromise was reached, splitting the difference between the Australian claim and the line of equidistance. The implication of Australia’s agreements with Indonesia was that the line through the Gap would simply join up the two boundaries between Australia and Indonesia.

When Australia tried to reach a similar agreement with Portugal, Lisbon decided not to initiate discussions until the forthcoming UN Law of the Sea conference was concluded. The Portuguese view, like Indonesia’s, was that the dividing line should be half-way between the coast of Timor and the coast of Australia. Supposedly Portugal expected to have this position strengthened by the Law of the Sea conference. The disputed area, the ‘Timor Gap’ was years later to have a great bearing on East Timor’s future history, as well as on political debate in neighbouring Australia, and that country’s relations with Indonesia.

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160 Noteworthy is that BHP, Australia’s largest company, had a 43.75 per cent interest in Woodside-Burmah Oil Ltd (which, as mentioned above, was controlling Australian Amalgamated Petroleum and International Oil), as well as a 51 per cent interest in a Portuguese oil company in Timor (Laurel Black, Australian Policy Towards East Timor. University of Adelaide: Unpublished B. A. Thesis, 1982, p. 11.) This Portuguese company was presumably the Companhia dos Petróleus do Timor. Bowman (1974) mentions it as a subsidiary of Timor Oil.

161 Reece, op. cit., p. 7.


164 When the UN in 1970 decided to proceed with the Third United Nations Law of the Sea Conference it was an admission that the existing system governing the oceans was outdated. The traditional system had been formed by the nations of Europe, the USA and Japan. The two most important factors contributing to the downfall of this system were the technological revolution after W.W.II which opened up the oceans to unprecedented exploitation, and the end of colonialism, which resulted in the emergence of any new states whose interests conflicted with those of the major powers. A convention on the Law of the Sea was finally adopted on 30 April 1982. Among other things, the Convention on the Law of the Sea provided for a territorial breadth of twelve nautical miles, and an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles, where the coastal state may exercise sovereign rights for exploration, exploitation, conservation or management of all living and non-living resources. When it came down to the matter of passage through international straits, a new doctrine was adopted which provided for free passage by ‘normal modes of continuous and expeditious passage through the waters of such straits’ (Albert W. Koers and Bernard H. Oxman (eds),The 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. Honolulu: The Law of the Sea Institute, University of Hawaii, 1984, pp. xxiv-xxxi).

165 Richardson, op. cit. p. 44.
Dili – new thoughts, new identities

As jobseekers migrated into Dili during the post-war period, they were also joined by an increasing number of students. This increase in opportunities for the East Timorese was largely a result of the 1959 uprising, as a pressure relief for at least the upper strata of East Timorese society. At a lower level things were different. Despite a law being passed in 1964 that schooling would be compulsory for all children between 6 and 11 the percentage of children actually attending a school was only 53% as late as 1973. The obstacles to girls getting an education were even greater than those for boys. Figures for primary school enrolments in the years 1965, 1970 and 1971 show that girls were 36%, 25% and 25% respectively of the pupils enrolled. And merely enrolling did not necessarily mean that you finished a course; the Bureau of Statistics reported illiteracy at 93% among the East Timorese population in 1973. For those few girls who received an education, this did not necessarily mean that they gained the means to empower or liberate themselves, as they were mostly trained by nuns “in a limited and pious primary education”.

Only a few people went to school in Portuguese times – and they only received up to middle school courses. There might have been 50 women altogether who had been educated back then, and only one or two had gone for superior studies …”.

As mentioned many times earlier, the East Timorese were never a homogenous community. In the late 60’s/early 70’s period discussed here, there were thirty-something local languages/dialects in everyday use. Most of these exhibit marked dialectical and cultural variants, some being as dissimilar as English and Japanese. Until 1974 the Timorese did not experience rapid social change nor the broadening of ideas and experience which ensues from interaction with a variety of other groups. They had never had to make major accomodations to new social economic and political conditions, except perhaps during the 2nd World war when the Japanese occupied their country. Also, before the early 1970’s people did not identify themselves as East Timorese. Rather, people classified themselves as Portuguese, Portuguese Timorese, Chinese, or by their ethno-linguistic group, i.e. Mambai, Tetum, Makassae etc. Portuguese was the language of the Mestizo, Hakka was the major Chinese language, and Lingua Franca Tetun the language most commonly used between the majority of the various linguistic groups.

In the countryside, age-old traditions still dominated every aspect of daily life, with rituals accompanying important events to make sure that ancestors would not disapprove of the endeavours, which would threaten the whole community with sickness or famine. Local liurais and lulik priests still wielded absolute power, with some liurais able to muster as many as 500 armed warriors in conflicts against neighbours. In the words of Bill Nicol,

The idea of the individual was blurred by the responsibility and obligations all had to the tribe. Cohesion of the tribe, and thus obedience to the chief, was necessary for survival against rival tribes. All work was carried on co-

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166 Ranck, op. cit., pp. 79-125.
167 Hill, op. cit., p. 49.
operatively and armed warriors would guard fields being cultivated by their tribesmen.\textsuperscript{171}

The migrants into Dili came from nearly all the Timorese ethnic regions, and residential segregation on ethnic lines was not evident among the Timorese, who showed no propensity to divide along lines of ethnic or language identities among themselves – apart from the above mentioned, stereotyped conglomerations kaladi and firaku. Stephen Ranck estimated that in the mid 1970s almost half of the married migrants had spouses from different linguistic backgrounds than themselves.\textsuperscript{172}

It is within this setting that the embryo of modern politics was born, among immigrants from villages across Timor. Many of the young men (very few were women) who formed the nucleus of what was to become political parties were born in the late 1940’s and belonged to the small but growing – a mere 375 in 1927, over 2,000 by 1950 - Mestizo population;\textsuperscript{173} some were indigenous Timorese, most had passed through tertiary school at Soibada, the first stop between the home villages and the capital. Most of them were first generation immigrants into Dili, coming from a variety of regions and ethno-linguistic group.\textsuperscript{174}

In a country where illiteracy was estimated at more than 90 per cent, any educated person may be considered belonging to the elite. And it was this class, later divided in its support for different political parties, which helped to decide Timor’s future.\textsuperscript{175} Educated according to Portuguese standards, versed in the Portuguese language and Portuguese history and literature, many among them saw themselves as a part of a broader Portuguese cultural world. They listened to Portuguese fado and Brazilian popular music, they played soccer on teams with names such as Benfica or Sporting, and when a select few of them had a chance to study abroad, this meant going to Lisbon or Macau.\textsuperscript{176}

A number of the later-to-become-politicians studied at the Jesuit-run seminary at Dare\textsuperscript{177}, outside Dili. The teachers there were from the mid 1960’s differed strongly from earlier generations, influenced as they were by the new pope, John XXIII, elected in October 1958, and the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) which to a high degree reversed the reactionary policies of Pius XII. In his encyclicas Mater et Magistra (1961) and Pacem in Terris (1963) John XXIII spoke out on behalf of social justice and human rights, and the Second Vatican Council emphasized that church resources should serve truth, peace and justice, with special attention to the poor and unpossessed. In this climate of new openness, the students at Dare met with ideas that hitherto had been banned from the territory.\textsuperscript{178} Some Timorese even went to Portugal to study at university level. Before 1970 there were only scholarships for two East Timorese each year to do this, but after 1970 the number was increased and 1974 there were thirty-nine students from Timor studying at universities in Portugal.\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{172} Ranck , op. cit., pp. 107-133.
\textsuperscript{173} Slowly there had developed a local Mestizo elite. By 1974, twelve of the thirteen District administrators were Mestizo; only one was European. Thatcher, op. cit., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{174} Hill, op. cit., p. 81.
\textsuperscript{175} Jill Jolliffe, Preface to Araújo 1975
\textsuperscript{177} Hill, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
supposedly “civilizing” policy proved to be fatal for the Portuguese authorities, as the Timorese students in Portugal met with even more revolutionary ideas than they had at Dare.

And new ideas, or even faint hopes of opportunities, such as low-ranking jobs within the administration, were badly wanted and needed. After graduating, a high percentage of East Timorese students joined a new ‘elite’ of urban, educated unemployed. Despite being Portuguese citizens they were not given the same chances as Europe-born Portuguese, who filled most positions in the local bureaucracy. For some female Timorese student, marrying a Portuguese meant a way out of perpetual unemployment, for the males there was no such escape route. Aggravating the resentment caused by this situation, was the fact that a small number of Cape Verdeans and Goans occupied administrative or bureaucratic positions within the colonial system, making the educated Timorese feel even more of a disadvantaged and slighted minority in their own land.

Nobody expected any remedy to the situation from the local government, which by the early 1970s consisted of a Lisbon-appointed governor, supported by a consultative and a legislative assembly – twenty-one persons in all - whose representativeness in terms of the general population was nil, as they were nominated by the Governor or selected by the little there was of commercial and industrial interests in the territory. As Chrystello points out, they were there to rubber-stamp decisions already taken and to perpetuate the status quo.180

The soil was ready for political action towards change in Portuguese Timor, but the seeds came from far away Africa and Portugal. By controlling the press and the radio, the Portuguese authorities were able to ensure that the population heard and read what it wanted them to know.181 It was not until the mid-sixties that even the most educated learned of the existence of the liberation movements in the Portuguese African colonies. When Timorese students began to study at universities in Portugal in the late 1960s, they came in contact with revolutionary and anti-colonial theories through African students, and through Portuguese anti-fascists. “From that moment on we were no longer isolated. We could understand the just struggle of the peoples for national independence, for we had assimilated the thinking of the great revolutionary leaders” said Leonel Sales de Andrade to Helen Hill in 1974.182 Some, such as Rosa Muki Bonaparte, even began to question gender roles, as they hitherto had been defined by traditional society and the Catholic Church. A small number, seven to be exact, found an intellectual home in the PCTP/MRRP, Partido Comunista dos Trabalhadores Portugueses / Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado (The Portuguese Workers’ Communist Party/Reorganized Movement of the Party of the Proletariat), the Portuguese Maoist party.

Many of the Timorese students in Portugal met and discussed at the so called Casa Timorense in Lisbon. The ideas trickled back to Dili and resulted in January 1970 to the setting up an informal group which met in the park outside the Governor’s office in Dili, in full view of the passers-by in order not to attract the suspicion of DGS, Direção-Geral de Segurança, the Portuguese secret police, a somewhat less harsh successor of PIDE. Mari Alkatiri was one of the founders of this group.183 Others were José Ramos Horta, Justino Mota, César Mau Laka (a.k.a. César Correia Lebre), Borja da Costa – and, with a lesser involvement, Nicolau Lobato. They also formed a musical band as a “cover” for its meetings – and as a vehicle to proselytise its message among the Timorese youth. The band had several names: Academicos, Eclipse and Cinco do Oriente – and was quite popular. Mari Alkatiri was

181 Dunn, op. cit., p. 39.
182 Ibid, p. 64.
183 Ibid.
a guitar player in the band. Alkatirí and Horta were both to spend time in Portuguese Africa in the early 1970’s, Alkatirí to study surveying at the Angolan School of Geography, Angola, while Horta was sent to Mozambique after voicing opposition to Portuguese rule in Timor. Both returned to Timor with influences from the liberation movements MPLA and Frelimo firmly implanted in their heads.

The poet Borja da Costa – sometimes in collaboration with the musically talented Abílio Araújo – strived to combine traditional Timorese themes with nationalist ideas. Their jointly composed “Foho Ramelau” was later to become the unofficial revolutionary hymn of the political party Fretilin. Da Costa’s background may be seen as a blue-print for many among the aspiring nationalists/revolutionaries of this generation. Born as the son of a liurai, he was educated at Soibada and Dare, was then employed in the Portuguese administration and fulfilled the obligatory military service. In 1973 he went to Lisbon, where at the Casa de Timorense he was introduced to and influenced by, the works of Bertolt Brecht, Pablo Neruda, Maxim Gorky, Mao Zedong and various other writers with Marxist leanings.

While such books were not freely flaunted in DGS-controlled Dili, the seeds had been sown, the wheels had been set in motion. Some members of this group contributed articles to the local fortnightly diocesan newspaper Seara under assumed names, or often anonymously. When an article entitled ‘Será Verdade?’ (Is it True?), which listed the ills of East Timor, including poverty, hunger and illiteracy, appeared, Seara was closed down on 24 March 1973 due to the intervention of the DGS. The article was written by Xavier do Amaral, later to become President of the Fretilin party, and also the President of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

At one point a secret approach was made to the Indonesian Consul in Dili by members of this group, with a request for scholarships to study in Indonesia. To their disappointment this request was turned down. They knew that Indonesia had gone through a successful anti-colonial struggle, but PIDE/DGS (and the general lack of information about the outside world) had seen to it that information about developments in their increasingly powerful neighbouring country had been kept to a minimum. They were unaware of the discussion that had been held regarding the future status of Portuguese Timor when the territorial confines of the independent Republic of Indonesia were decided upon at the end of W.W.II. They were also blissfully unaware that Wawasan Nusantara, the Nusantara (Archipelago) Principle, had in fact made an anomaly of Portuguese Timor in the eyes of influential circles in Indonesia. When Guinea-Bissau’s PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde, the African party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) proclaimed independence in September 1973 it was recognised by sixty-six nations, more than those who maintained diplomatic relations with Portugal. This was yet another sign of Estado da Índia increasingly becoming an anomaly, not only in Indonesian eyes. More of that in the following chapter.

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184 Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 126. Unlike virtually all others among this nascent political movement, Alkatirí emerged from the small Muslim community in Dili, which at the time numbered about 500.
186 Edited by Father Martinho da Costa Lopes, who will turn up again later in this story.
Chapter 8 National liberations near and afar

Indonesia ca 1908-1974. Out of the old order and into the new

In a two-day naval battle in the waters of the Tsushima Strait, a small Japanese fleet at the end of May 1905 defeated and almost annihilated the Russian navy. Through the newly established telegraph system the contemporary world was reached – and astounded - by the news that a non-European country had defeated a European power. Colonial intellectuals were greatly inspired by the event; among them were Mohandas Gandhi, Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sun Yat-Sen, all to become important nationalist leaders in their respective countries. Indian babies were named after Japanese admirals and African-American leader W.E.B. Du Bois spoke of a world-wide coloured pride. Not long after the battle at Tsushima, the likewise telegraphed news of the slaughter of World War I deprived Europe of much of its remaining moral vestiges in the eyes of the colonial populations in Asia and elsewhere. Independence movements grew at an alarming rate – for the colonial powers that is – in countries as diverse as Egypt, Turkey, Persia, India, Afghanistan, China and, not least, the Dutch East Indies.1

The first steps in this development in Dutch East Indies were taken when young people educated within the Dutch colonial school system founded organisations such as Budi Utomo, Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam in the years 1908-12. By 1916 the biggest of these organisations, Sarekat Islam, had a membership of 360,000 and its political programme called for self-government. By 1919 its membership had reached almost two and a half million, and its aim was complete independence.2 At Sarekat Islam’s fourth congress in 1919 the more left leaning broke with the main body and converted their organisation into Perserikaten Kommunist di India, PKI, the Communist party of the Indies.3 PKI propaganda in the early years used a vocabulary which appealed to Indonesians and avoided political doctrines of Marx and Lenin. The classless society was instead presented as a reincarnation of Majapahit. Communist rebellions – inspired, of course, by the successor to the losing side, i.e. Tzarist Russia, at Tsushima - in 1926 and 1927 in Java and later on the West coast of Sumatra were quickly suppressed. The majority of the Communists were arrested and deported to New Guinea and the power of PKI was broken for the remainder of the period of Dutch rule.

The split between Sarekat Islam and PKI, and the sharp reaction by the government to the Communist rebellion, convinced many Moslem nationalists that work towards their national ideals could be better carried out through non-political channels. One such channel was the modernist Islamic social organisation Mohammadijah, which attracted a large number of Sarekat Islam’s members.4 In the Netherlands itself, Indonesian students had formed the IndischeVereeniging (Indies Association) in 1908. This was a social and cultural centre where the students could meet and keep up to date with news from home, but under the impact of a new generation of students social and cultural aspect ceased to be its basic function.

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3 Ibid, p. 74.
4 Ibid, pp. 84-87
By 1925 it was an organisation primarily concerned with political issues. As part of its new nationalist identity it adopted the Indonesian name Perhimpunan Indonesia, PI, and named its journal Indonesia Merdeka (Indonesia Free).

The PI members were never more than a fraction of the total number of Indonesian students in the Netherlands. However, the ideas and policies of the PI came to play a dominant role in the development of nationalism in Indonesia, and the majority of the top nationalist leaders after 1927 were men who had been active in this organisation in the Netherlands. The PI’s development into a radical political organisation owed much to Mohammad Hatta. Hatta and his colleagues observed the nationalist movement from the Netherlands and became dissatisfied with the political parties’ sectional appeals and their failure to create a strong mass-based organisation. To them the PKI was the most attractive of the parties in Indonesia because of its anti-colonial platform, but with few exceptions they rejected communism as the basis for an independent Indonesia. Hatta and his friends believed they had to develop a coherent ideology, free from the constraints of Islam or Communism, to be able to restructure the nationalist movement when they returned home.

The ideology developed within the PI by the beginning of 1925 expressed the primacy of the political goal of independence. The main ideas were national unity, meaning the setting aside of particularistic and regional differences between Indonesians, and solidarity, meaning to realise that the essential conflict was between colonisers and colonised. Non-co-operation, i.e., the need to recognise that independence would have to be seized by Indonesians, was another basic idea of PI. These ideas of the PI affected the course of the Indonesian nationalist movement via the return of its members to Indonesia and through its publications. The first of the Indonesian students in the Netherlands began to return home in the middle of 1923. They found it difficult to fit into the existing political parties, and looked for a new organisation.

The first sign of their dissatisfaction was their creation of study clubs, which for many were a transition stage between the PI and the final goal of a new nationalist party. The General Study Club started in 1926 the publication of a monthly journal Indonesia Moeda (Young Indonesia), which quickly gained a wide circulation. Early issues contained lengthy articles by a young student named Sukarno, entitled ‘Nationalism, Islam and Marxism’. Sukarno argues here that the Islamic, Marxist and Nationalist movements in Indonesia had a common origin in their desire to resist western capitalism and imperialism, and that the three streams of political activity must unite in a struggle against the common enemy. After the failed Communist uprisings in 1926 and 1927 Hatta completed his plans for a new party and the PI executive formally adopted his programme as PI policy. It called for the creation of an Indonesian nationalist party with a broad political, social and economic platform. On 4 June 1927 the Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI, was established by the members of the Bandung Study Club under the chairmanship of Sukarno.

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6 Kahin, op. cit., p. 88
7 Ingleson, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
8 Ibid, p. 5.
9 Kahin, op. cit., pp. 89-90.
10 Ibid, pp. 19-23.
11 Ibid, p. 94.
12 Kahin, op. cit., p. 90.
Youth organisations were also heavily influenced by the new nationalist ideology. The National Youth Congress held in 1928 was attended by all prominent youth organisations as well as by a number of leading political figures, including Sukarno. It proclaimed Indonesia to be ‘satu bangsa, satu bahasa, satu tanah air’ (one nation, one language, one motherland).

The congress adopted a national anthem, *Indonesia Raya*, renamed the lingua franca Malay language *Bahasa Indonesia* and proclaimed it to be the national language, choosing the red and white colours of the Majapahit kingdom as the colours of the national flag. Their motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), was taken from a poem of the Majapahit period, and the national emblem chosen was the Garuda, which had been used as a symbol by Majapahit. They also adopted the original name of Jakarta for Batavia.

Much of the influence behind the decisions made at 1928 Youth Congress came from Muhammad Yamin, a pioneer of modern Indonesian literature. Yamin emphasised in his keynote address to the congress the important influence of language on national unity. With hundreds of languages in the Archipelago such a language was essential. Essential to Yamin was unity throughout Nusantara, the Archipelago, and he hailed Gajah Mada, patih (foreign minister) of Majapahit, as the most successful unifier of Nusantara. Yamin viewed the history of Indonesia in general as ‘one single development’; from its status of independence before the arrival of the Western peoples, to the status of colonialism and back to independence again. He dismissed individualised histories of the various islands and ethnic groups of the Indonesian archipelago: ‘when we view thoroughly and deeply, we can only speak of Indonesian history, there is no separate history of Java, Sumatra, Borneo or Celebes’.

Drawing on Ernest Renan’s theory on nationhood, Yamin was of the opinion that the unity of history exercised a great influence on the building of a nation. A nation was ‘more like a spirit than a body’. The first aspect of the spirit could be traced in the past, while the second aspect was connected with the present. For Indonesia, Yamin said, the past was characterised by heroism, glory, and high culture. However, because of colonialism it was also full of sadness and sacrifice. These sacrifices had cemented the nation and had alleviated weaknesses which had been present in Srivijaya and Majapahit.

A powerful tool for the nationalists was the concept of Marhaen, as conceived of by Sukarno. With this concept Sukarno created a symbol for the *Indonesian* masses, as opposed to the analytical anonymous masses of Socialist rhetoric. Below is an abridged extract of a speech where Sukarno explains how he came upon the term Marhaen:

> One day I came across a man hoeing a field. I asked him: ‘Brother, who owns this field?’ ‘I do,’ he said. And so he participated in ownership in the means of production, owning that rice field. ‘And the hoe, who owns that?’ ‘I do.’ ‘These tools, who owns these?’ ‘I do.’ ‘But brother, you live in poverty?’ ‘That’s right, I live poorly.’ And I thought to myself then, this man is clearly and definitely not a member of the proletariat. He is a pauper, he suffers a great deal. But he is not a member of the proletariat, for he does not sell his labour power to another without participating in the ownership in the means of production. I asked him ‘What is your name?’ ‘Marhaen,’ he said. I had an inspiration to use this name to describe the destitute people of Indonesia.

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13 Ingleson, op. cit., p. 65.
16 Ibid, p. 252.
18 Ibid.
Almost all of the People of Indonesia are Marhaen! They are the poor, common people; yes, the poor worker; yes, the poor peasant; yes, the poor fisherman; yes, the poor clerk; yes, the poor stall vendor; yes, the poor cart driver; yes, the poor chauffeur - all of these are embraced by the one term, Marhaen.19

The Dutch authorities arrested Sukarno and other PNI leaders on 24 December 1929.20 The PNI was outlawed, and its membership was absorbed by new organisations. The majority joined Partai Indonesia, usually referred to as Partindo. An important minority of the old party refused to abandon the old PNI programme. They soon chose the name Club Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Education Club), and became known as PNI Baru, the New PNI.21 Muhammad Hatta returned to Indonesia in 1932 and became chairman of the PNI Baru. He concentrated on recruiting and educating a well-disciplined cadre and building an organisational structure, rather than holding spectacular large-scale public meetings (the Sukarno style). Hatta was convinced that a nationalist party had to accommodate itself to the restrictions of the colonial government and continually change its tactics in order to survive and develop. Hatta’s philosophy proved to be effective, and PNI Baru quickly enlarged its membership.22

Released from jail on 31 December 1931, Sukarno eventually became chairman of Partindo. Between May 1932 and July 1933 Partindo membership grew from 4,300 to 20,000, and in July 1933 the party accepted Sukarno’s concept of Marhaenism, responding to the ideological appeal of the PNI Baru with its stress on people’s sovereignty and collectivism.23

The 1930s were a period of growing confrontation between the Dutch colonialists and Indonesian nationalists. The Dutch, affected by the world-wide depression, felt the need to extract ever more wealth from the colonies and therefore sought to vigorously suppress all the nationalist aspirations of the Indonesians. Sukarno was again arrested in August 1933 and exiled to Flores.24

As Dutch attitudes hardened and a police state was imposed, the nationalist movement once again fragmented into those who advocated working within the system; those who had as their goal the gradual mobilisation of the people; and those who opted for more direct confrontation.25 Those who hoped for an evolutionary development toward self-government soon experienced a shock when the Netherlands government rejected a proposal by the Volksraad (consultative body to the governor-general) to convene a conference to discuss plans for a ten year evolutionary development of Indonesia toward self-government within the limits of the existing Dutch Constitution.

In 1939 eight Indonesian nationalist organisations were drawn together into one large federation, the GAPI, Gaboengan Politiek Indonesia, (Federation of Indonesian Political Parties), with a programme for the right to self-determination for Indonesia, for a national unity founded upon political, economic and social democracy, for a democratically-elected Indonesian parliament responsible to the people of Indonesia, and for solidarity between Indonesian political groups and the Netherlands in order to maintain a strong anti-Fascist front.26

20 Kahin, op. cit., p. 92.
21 Ingleson, op. cit., p. 154.
22 Ibid, pp. 177-178.
23 Ibid, pp. 189-191.
24 Kahin, op. Cit., p. 94.
25 Drake, op. cit., 35.
26 Kahin, op. cit., p. 97.
The Second World War was a catalyst for the nationalist struggle in Netherlands East Indies, as it was for the rest of the still-colonized world, i.e. much of Asia and Africa. On 14 February 1942 the Japanese attacked and quickly overran South Sumatra. On 1 March they landed on Java and within eight days the Dutch Commander in Chief of Allied Forces on Java surrendered. There was a widespread feeling among Indonesians that the Japanese came as liberators. This was reinforced when they immediately allowed the display of the red and white Indonesian flag and the singing of *Indonesia Raya*, both forbidden by the Dutch. Within six months practically the whole Dutch population was interned in concentration camps.

The Japanese had to rely on Indonesians to fill many administrative and technical positions and thus won the support, or neutralised the antipathy, of a large portion of educated Indonesians. The Japanese released Sukarno, who, together with the PI Baru leaders Hatta and Sjahrrir, decided that the nationalist struggle should continue at two levels, above ground and underground. Sukarno and Hatta were to work above ground through the Japanese, and Sjahrrir was to organise an underground resistance. The Japanese promised that self-government would be granted in the near future and allowed the establishment, on 9 March 1943, of an all-inclusive nationalist organisation, the Poetera, *Poesat Tenaga* (Centre of People’s Power). A board of four members, with Sukarno as chairman and Hatta as vice-chairman, were appointed by the Japanese to head Poetera. For the Japanese the Poetera was a means for rallying Indonesian support behind their war effort, and to the nationalist leaders it was a means for spreading and intensifying nationalist ideas among the masses and forcing concessions from the Japanese toward self-government.

When W.W.II was nearing its end, and Allied victories drew closer to Indonesia, the Japanese military authorities began to take steps towards the establishment of an independent Indonesian government. On 1 March 1945 the *Badan Penjelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan*, Investigating Committee for the Preparation of Independence, was established. Sukarno delivered a speech before the Badan Penjelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan on 1 June 1945, which has become famous as the *Pancasila* Speech. Sukarno then announced the five principles of Pancasila. These principles (faith in one God, humanity, nationalism, representative government and social justice) were the foundation on which Sukarno said an independent Indonesian nation would be based. In explaining the five principles Sukarno stated that the first principle which must underlie the philosophical basis of a free Indonesia is nationalism, but not nationalism in a narrow sense. He said that Renan’s requirement of a nation – Man’s desire to unite – was not adequate, because it did not take into consideration the additional requisite of ‘unity between men and place’. According to Sukarno the Indonesian people are all the human beings who, according to geopolitics ordained by God Almighty, live throughout the entire archipelago of Indonesia from the northern tip of Sumatra to Papua, an area which – in this view - had twice experienced a national state, in the time of Srivijaya and in the time of Majapahit.

To define the Indonesian people as those who ‘according to geopolitics ordained by God Almighty’ populated the archipelago was easy enough. To define this territory in explicit geographical terms was a different matter. The members of the committee (six of them were Japanese) voted by secret ballot on the correct territorial definition of their proposed nation. There were three plans and the voting was as follows:

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27 Kahin, op. cit., pp. 101-104.
28 Ibid, pp. 105-106.
29 Ibid, p. 121.
1. Former territories of the Netherlands East Indies and North Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak, Portuguese Timor, Malaya, New Guinea, and surrounding islands – thirty-nine votes.
2. Former territory of the Netherlands East Indies – nineteen votes.
3. Former territory of the Netherlands East Indies combined with Malaya and omitting New Guinea – six votes.

In spite of the thirty-nine votes on the first plan the Japanese were in the end able to influence the nationalists to accept the second plan.31 As we shall see, the first plan was put to the side only temporarily.

The Dutch were determined to retake the colony. The struggle against the Dutch was a time of growing solidarity and psychological unity for many Indonesians. The Dutch ‘pacification exercises’ and the imprisonment of Indonesian leaders strengthened national resistance and provided a strong integrative force.32 After a four year vicious and bloody War of Independence and diplomatic pressure, especially from the United States, the Netherlands formally transferred power, on 27 December 1949, to a Federation of Indonesian States.

Support for this Federation centred in parts of Java, including Jakarta, and parts of Sumatra. There was no strong or active Indonesian nationalist organisation in eastern Indonesia, where the Japanese had not permitted Indonesian nationalists to organise. The Ambonese supported the Dutch, and even fought alongside them in the War of Independence, and from 1951 a self-proclaimed RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan, Republic of South Moluccas) revolted against the central government. Indonesian military had defeated the Ambonese uprising by 1953, after which the resistance continued on Seram,33 where its leader Chris Soumokil was killed in 1966. By then many South Moluccans had been expatriated to the Netherlands where a government-in-exile was formed. First in West Java and Atjéh, and then later in South Sulawesi and Kalimantan, the Darul Islam movement aimed at establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia. It backed its claim with guerrilla warfare, which lasted from 1950 to the mid-1960s.34

An increasingly stronger Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, Partai Kommunis Indonesia) had also by the early 1960s been successful in building a strong mass base. The resentment and uprisings against Jakarta in different parts of the country, and the apparent fragility of the new state led in the 1950s to a transition from a weak federal system to a centralised Republic of Indonesia. The uprisings, and especially the tough resistance from the RMS special forces, also led ABRI, Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia), to create their own special forces, Kesko TT, Kesuatuan Komando Tentara Territorium (Third Territorial Command), also called Baret Merah (Red Berets) after their distinctive headgear. The special forces of ABRI was to have different incarnations in the years to come, but the red berets were always a distinguishing feature regardless of the official name of the troops.

In 1955 Indonesia’s first free and fair general elections were held. Four major and several minor parties gained representation in parliament. The Sukarno led nationalist party PNI received 22.3 per cent of the vote.35 Also in 1955 Indonesia hosted the Asian-African Conference of Third World leaders (the forerunner to the Non-Aligned-Movement, founded in 1961) in Bandung. The background to the conference was that in the wake of World War II,

32 Drake, op. cit., p. 42.
33 The main islands of the South Moluccas are Ambon, Seram and Buru.
34 Drake, op. cit. p. 43.
The United States and the Soviet Union confronted one another with rival political systems and conflicts of interest throughout the world. The policy of the US vis-à-vis the Soviet Union was formulated by George F. Kennan, a Foreign Service officer in the American embassy in Moscow. What was needed was a “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” Containment meant achieving the desired objective by means of covert action and de-stabilization, rather than recourse to full-scale military force on the part of the US. Washington’s strategy was to support almost any regime, no matter how repressive, if it claimed to be anti-communist. To allow even an underdeveloped country with no industrial-military capacity to fall under communist control could shake self-confidence throughout the non-communist world. This was what Eisenhower had in mind when, in 1954, he invoked the most famous of all Cold War metaphors: “You have a row of dominos set up, you knock over the first one, and . . . then the last one . . . will go over very quickly. So you could have . . . a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.”

The Soviet Union’s global strategy, known as the ‘Two Camps’ or ‘Zhdanov’ doctrine after the chief ideologist of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, saw the world as consisting of two opposing world systems, the socialist, ‘progressive’ camp, and the capitalist, ‘reactionary’ camp. According to Zhdanov, the capitalist world faced an economic crisis, and as a result of that supported any regime – no matter how undemocratic – in order to expand and create new markets, or else face collapse of its economic system. The answer to this would have to be Soviet military strength, as capitalism would never renounce power voluntarily, and to ensure that national-liberation movements in the formerly colonial world would enter, and remain within, the socialist camp.

The two systems confronted each other head-on in East and Southeast Asia in the 1950’s, following China’s entry into the communist camp in 1949, and North Korea’s attack on South Korea across the WWII demarcation line on 25 June 1950, backed by the Soviet Union. The United Nations responded with the formation and dispatch of a 21-country UN force, with the United States as the major military component. The North Korean forces were driven back, until China on 27 November attacked across the border from the north. The resulting war lasted until July 1953, with the Korean peninsula largely devastated and with no clear victory for either side. A side effect of the conflict was that the US strengthened its military presence in Japan and established military links with Taiwan, the base of Chiang Kai-Shek’s nationalist party Kuomintang, the losing side in the Chinese civil war which led to the victory of Mao Zedong’s communists in 1949.

It seemed to be only a matter of time until similar clashes between the Cold War opponents would occur on the African continent.

A number of newly independent and thus ‘prospective dominos’/’prospective Soviet affiliates’ met and discussed a number of core principles - political self-determination, mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality – principles that had been worked out the year before in negotiations between India and China. The goal was to build solidarity among recently (and not yet-) independent nations, to promote efforts to reduce their reliance on Europe and North America, and to avoid being forced to take sides in the Cold War contest. The Bandung conference, with delegations from

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39 Gaddis, op. cit., p. 123.
PART 2 PORTUGUESE TIMOR 1915-1975. FROM ISOLATION TO INVASION

twenty-nine countries (including non-Third World Yugoslavia), boosted Sukarno’s personal political prestige and strengthened his aspirations to play a world leadership role, especially among new nations.\(^{42}\) Through the nationalising of Dutch economic interests, the expulsion of many Dutch and Chinese, and his success in attaining the transfer of West New Guinea to Indonesian control, Sukarno at the same time added to the sense of national unity.\(^{43}\)

This sense of national unity was not uniform within the Indonesian Republic. Economic disparity led to frictions between Java (where most of Indonesia's population lives) and the Outer islands (where cash crops and oil production is the source of most of Indonesia's foreign exchange) There was widespread fear of Javanese domination of politics and culture, and growing discontent with Jakarta’s centralised administrative control and the almost inevitable inefficiency of a newly created bureaucracy.

Thus, Indonesia remained a deeply divided society, with tensions between left and right, Communists and Moslems, army and civilians, and between the central government in Java and the Outer islands. These deep cleavages, aliran, caused frequent outbreaks of violence which plagued a great part of Indonesia's post-war history. The number of Indonesians who were killed by their countrymen far exceeded the death toll during the guerrilla struggle against the Dutch.\(^{44}\) There were also strains within the political leadership, between the symbol-wielding, politically oriented President Sukarno, and the economics-minded Vice-President Mohammed Hatta.\(^{45}\) Hatta finally resigned in December 1956, which meant that an important anti-expansionist voice disappeared. Hatta had in 1945 advised against the ‘greater Indonesia’ idea, arguing for an independent Indonesia within the borders of the territory previously under Dutch rule. He had specifically warned against any attempts to incorporate Malaya and Papua, “demands which may be regarded as imperialistic.”\(^{46}\) He was on the winning side in 1945, but ‘the times they are a-changing’ as the song goes. And change is not always for the better.

On 13 December 1957 the Government of the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed that the Territoriale Zee en Maritieme Kringen Ordonnantie 1939 (Territorial Sea and Maritime Circles Ordinance) would be substituted for a new delineation outlined by the Wawasan Nusantara (Archipelago Principle). The Dutch system was based on the principle of each island having its own territorial sea with a breadth of three miles. According to the Wawasan Nusantara the whole Archipelago is a single unity with the territorial sea having a breadth of twelve miles, measured from the line which connects the outermost points of the Indonesian islands.\(^{47}\) The background to the development of Wawasan Nusantara is that the Indonesian Constitution of 1945 does not provide a more specific stipulation regarding the territory of independent Indonesia other than that it consists of ‘the whole nation of Indonesia and the whole country of Indonesia’. In this legalistic vacuum, and as a logical corollary to the problems in achieving unity in a multi-ethnic and multi-island nation, the concept of Wawasan Nusantara was developed.

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\(^{43}\) Drake, op. cit., p. 45.


\(^{45}\) Hatta had also advised against the ‘greater Indonesia’ idea in 1945, arguing on behalf of an Indonesia within the borders of the territory previously under Dutch rule.


The philosophy behind Wawasan Nusantara, as explained by Danusaputro, is that the islands are considered as being one whole unit. If the archipelago is subdivided there would only remain ‘the form of an island and not the essence of an archipelago’. The Wawasan Nusantara views ‘those islands always as one unit’, with the water between the islands a linking rather than dividing element. This meant that the plan for a Greater Indonesia that was rejected in June 1945 had made a comeback. The Wawasan Nusantara was established in the context of national law by Act. No. 4 of 1960, making Portuguese Timor a legalistic anomaly as seen from Jakarta. If Indonesia is defined according to a concept which sees the archipelago (i.e. the Republic of Indonesia) as one unit, Timor, Portuguese or independent, would in Danusaputro’s words be ‘only ... an island’, breaking up the ‘essence of an archipelago’.

The *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*, The Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) and Permesta (*Perdjuangan Semesta*, Universal Struggle) rebellions of 1958-1961, centred in West Sumatra and Sulawesi, respectively, protesting against corruption, economic mismanagement, Sukarno’s close links with the PKI and demanding greater autonomy for their regions, were the most serious threats to the territorial integrity of Indonesia since independence. Both revolts had strong local support, including members of the military. The rebels also enjoyed support from the Masyami party, and covert backing from the US government. The reason for the US supporting regionalist movements was the conclusion reached by the Eisenhower government that the rise of the PKI would best be countered by the splitting up of Indonesia into smaller units. Army headquarters in Jakarta pressured Sukarno to declare martial law, and this he also did on 14 March, 1957.

While the army attacked the rebels, Sukarno in 1958 introduced his ‘Guided Democracy’, which, among other things, meant the dissolving of the Constituent Assembly and replacing of the National Council with a Supreme Advisory Council and a National Planning Council. Western-style democracy, particularly the idea of institutionalised opposition, was blamed for the sharpening of social tensions. The main opponents to Sukarno, the Moslem Masyumi party and the small socialist PSI were banned in August 1960. The PKI had in the 1950s been able to re-organise and mobilise after having been almost crushed in the late 1920s, and gave its support to PNI and Sukarno when Guided Democracy was introduced.

Sukarno now emphasised the doctrine of Nasakom (*Nasionalisme, Agama, Komunisme*, Nationalism, Religion, Communism.) Angered by US support for the rebels, Sukarno became increasingly anti-American, and at the same time increasingly dependent on the PKI, which by 1965 had grown to be the third largest communist party in the world, only outnumbered by its Soviet and Chinese counterparts. The politically influential army was generally opposed to the communists, and the period of Guided Democracy was characterised by Sukarno’s efforts to find a balance between the predominantly right-wing military and the PKI. The communists, under constant threat from Islamists and military needed the protection of Sukarno, and Sukarno had a vision of using the PKI’s strong grass-roots support to back his own politics, which involved checking the growing influence of the army.

The military had crushed the uprisings by early 1962. Jakarta’s control over the provinces was thereby tightened and the government became increasingly authoritarian. Following the overwhelming defeat of the rebellions, General Nasution found it expedient to purge the army of dissidents and personal opponents and became the undisputed leader. This was a period

48 Danusaputro, op. cit., pp. 54-55.
50 Ibid, pp. 68-69.
52 Uhlin, op. cit., pp. 70-72.
53 Drake, op. cit., p. 48.
when the Indonesian military leaders acquired enormous power in society as a whole, a power they had no intention to relinquish.\textsuperscript{54} One significant sign of this was the military’s involvement in the petroleum business when, following the nationalisation of Dutch assets in 1957, Lieutenant-General Ibnu Sutowo became the head of the state-owned oil-company Perminia (which, after a merger with another company became Pertamina in 1968. More of Pertamina later). High-ranking officers also began to occupy important political positions, such as cabinet ministers and provincial governors.

The military’s strength was further enhanced by a massive arms loan from the Soviet Union in 1961, ironically enough at a time the US reconsidered its’ strategy on Indonesia, and now opted to back Nasution and the aggressively anti-communist military. Indonesian officers were invited to undergo military training in the US, and the Indonesian armed forces were presented with generous deliveries of US-made weapons.

While the Indonesian military gained friends abroad, the Communists, on the other hand, found themselves increasingly isolated. While the Soviet Union at the time often pursued pragmatic policies in the greater interest of the Cold War balance of power, this contrasted with the ideology of the PKI. The party’s leader in 1963 even questioned the right of the Soviet Union to call itself socialist, echoing a similar critic from the more revolutionary China.\textsuperscript{55} The immediate reason for this was the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, where a stand-off between the US and the Soviet Union brought the world to the brink of another major war, albeit this time with both sides armed with nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union had in mid-1962 placed intermediate- and medium-range missiles on Cuba (at the latter’s request) as a response to the failed US-supported Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, and the presence of American missiles in England, Italy and Turkey; all with the ability to strike at Moscow. The United States learned about the missiles in October from high-tech surveillance U-2 planes. Shortly thereafter, President Kennedy decided to quarantine the island, to stop further missiles being deployed and to also demand that the weapons already in Cuba be dismantled. Eventually Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev yielded without first consulting Cuban leader Fidel Castro, rather than risk a military confrontation over the issue. A series of agreements then reduced US-Soviet tensions in the following years. The agreements were based on the logical assumption that a US-Soviet war could no longer have a winner, and was based on a strategy which became known under the acronym MAD ‘Mutual Assured Destruction’.\textsuperscript{56}

The split between the two major communist parties of the world had already begun already soon after Josef Stalin’s death in 1953, and was widened after a speech by new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in February 1956 in which he denounced Stalin’s purges. In 1958, the Chinese launched their Great Leap Forward, in an attempt – which proved to be disastrous – to reorganize the economy in a revolutionary way on the basis of communes; a strategy which differed greatly from that of the Soviet Union. China also disagreed with the Soviet policy of peaceful co-existence with the West, based on the fear of nuclear war, and instead advocated a policy of confrontation with the capitalist world.\textsuperscript{57} A Chinese ideological campaign against the Soviet Union then made Khrushchev withdraw all Soviet advisers from the People’s Republic of China in July1960.

It was, however, the Cuban Missile Crisis that struck a fatal blow to Sino-Soviet friendship. A Chinese media campaign denounced the withdrawal, and accused the Soviet

\textsuperscript{55} Mehr, op. cit., pp. 24-29.
\textsuperscript{56} Gaddis, op. cit., p. 80.
Union of ‘adventurism’ for sending the missiles to Cuba in the first place and then of ‘capitulationism’ for withdrawing them.58 From now on, a difficult to negotiate, complex world with a triangular power base evolved in global politics. While two of the big three were communist powers, it was by no means a clear split of two against one. In March 1969, fighting broke out between Soviet and Chinese troops along the Ussuri river, the border their nations shared, and by August there were rumours of all-out war between the world’s most powerful communist states. The Sino-Soviet split gave the United States leverage to play the two communist giants against each other.59 In February 1972 US President Richard Nixon made a personal visit to China, resulting in the Shanghai Communiqué, a diplomatic accord signed by Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Elai, marking a beginning of normalizing relations between the two countries. 1969 also saw the beginning of détente, a general easing of Cold War tensions between the USA and the Soviet Union. This ‘thawing’ was seen by both parties as a necessity, since the Cuban crisis in 1962 almost brought the two countries to the brink of nuclear war, leading to mutually assured destruction, or MAD, an acronym which formed the background to world politics for many years since then. Détente ended abruptly after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979.

And amidst the big three was tiny but self-assured Cuba. The Cuban leaders had a different world-view from not only that of the USA, ‘freedom versus tyranny’, but also from the Zhdanov doctrine of the Soviet Union, in that it saw the world as dominated by conflict between privileged and underprivileged, the major difference not being between socialist and capitalist states but between developed and underdeveloped countries. Also, according to this view, both the Soviet Union and their European allies were white and – at least by Third World standards - rich; while the Chinese were unable to adapt to African and Latin American culture. Cuba saw itself as non-white and poor and culturally a mix between Latin America and Africa.

During the first half of the 1960’s, the Cuban leaders had viewed Latin America “as a tinder box to which one merely had to apply a spark… to set off the revolutionary explosion”, a spark which could be provided by focos, small guerrilla troops that, if supported by the people could overcome a regular army.60 Accordingly, Cuba trained some two thousand Latin Americans in guerrilla warfare in Cuba. However, theory clashed with reality when uprisings in various Latin American countries suffered military defeat. Cuba’s supporter, the Soviet Union, grew more than a little disgruntled about the situation and strongly urged restraint. Cuba then instead gradually turned its gaze towards the anti-colonial struggles taking place in Africa. In January 1962, a Cuban ship unloaded weapons at Casablanca for the anti-colonial rebels in Algeria, and returned to Havana with seventy-six wounded guerrillas and twenty children from refugee camps. Algeria gained its independence from France on July 3, 1962, and in September 1963 Moroccan troops occupied some disputed border posts between the countries. Algeria retook them, leading to a short “war in the desert”. Cuba sent troops to assist Algeria, a move that may have speeded up the signing of a cease-fire between Algeria and Morocco already the following month. Cuba had by then also made contact with the rebels of Guinea-Bissau through their African embassies, and in December 1964 Che Guevara went to Africa on a three-month trip, during which he met Amilcar Cabral of PAIGC and pledged military instructors to Guinea Bissau, and to rebels in Congo and Angola.61

61 Ibid, pp. 7-25.
African adventure had begun in earnest, adding to the already profound complexity of world politics. Indonesia post-Sukarno was soon to become a most cunning participant in this real-political game.

**Indonesia incorporates West New Guinea**

The western half of New Guinea was mostly used as a penal colony by the Dutch during the colonial period. In 1935, however, oil seepages were recorded, and agricultural concessions granted to the Japanese were later shown to have been used for oil exploration. Shortly thereafter the Dutch allowed the US Standard Oil company to begin drilling in West New Guinea, where oil was found in 1936. The joint Dutch-US exploration company also sponsored a three-man trek into the mountainous interior of the island, where they discovered a massive gold deposit in the high altitude landscape, “shrouded in mist and soon to be shrouded in secrecy.”

When Allied troops landed in the territory in April 1944 they brought in geological teams to carry out explorations, and found large deposits of nickel and cobalt. Gag Island was estimated to hold ten per cent of the world’s known nickel, and in the Cartensz Range a deposit of copper was found which has been described as the world’s largest outcrop. The petroleum in Bird’s Head was almost pure distillate. When the Dutch were forced to negotiate the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia, the Dutch delegation to the conference insisted on a provision excluding West Papua from the final agreement, and it was left unresolved on the provision that it would be the subject of later negotiations. The Dutch argued that the territory had precious little in the way of natural resources except for timber. The existing rich mineral resources were unknown to the Indonesian side, which saw incorporation of West New Guinea mainly as a nationalist project.

Indonesia-US relations had deteriorated during the 1950s because of US support for the Permesta rebellion. Indonesia concluded several arms deals with East European countries, including one with Moscow in 1961. After John Kennedy became President in 1961, the US launched a diplomatic offensive aimed at establishing good relations with Sukarno and at steering the dispute about West New Guinea away from armed confrontation. Washington’s special ambassador, formally mediating in the talks on behalf of the UN Secretary General, brought the Indonesians and the Dutch together in negotiations. The talks resulted in August 1962 in an agreement which said that self-determination would be carried out under arrangements made by Indonesia. The role of the UN was limited to “advice, assistance and participation.”

In West New Guinea, renamed by Indonesia *Irian Barat* (West Irian), the transfer agreement met with sharp opposition. There were strong protests by Papuans who accused America of selling out their rights.

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64 Poulgrain, op. cit., p. 18.


66 Budiardjo and Liong, op. cit., pp. 9-12.
People demonstrated in Hollandia and other places carrying signs reading ‘How many dollars for a Papuan, Yankees?’ The protests reflected a growing Papuan nationalism, the result of economic and educational developments between 1949 and 1962, and a steady ‘Papuanisation’ of civil administration. By 1960 more than half of the civil officials were Pauans, and a New Guinea Council, with predominantly Papuan members, had been established. Political parties had emerged, virtually all committed to further Papuan political autonomy or independence.67 Political parties had emerged, virtually all committed to further Papuan political autonomy or independence. The one exception was a party with an almost exclusively Indonesian membership.

In 1961, a project was launched which in hindsight can be viewed as a dress rehearsal for Operasi Komodo (see next chapter). In that year, one Major Ali Murtopo and a Major Rudjito were key figures in the planning of Operasi Tjendrawasih (Operation Bird of Paradise) an operation designed to facilitate the military penetration of West New Guinea behind Dutch lines. The operation was the first major task of the newly formed Strategic Reserve, better known as KOSTRAD, a special strike force which came under the command of one Brigadier-General Suharto, whose deputy was a naval officer named Sudomo. An amphibious force moved to the Malaku Selatan area, on the West Irian coast, in late 1961 and, in due course, some paratroop units were dropped behind Dutch lines. One of these units was under the command of Captain Benny Murdani. Another young officer who was involved in Operasi Tjendrawasih was Lieutenant Dading Kalbuadi.68 All of these names were also to be key figures in the events leading up to, and including, the invasion of Portuguese Timor in December 1975.

The UN General Assembly ratified the agreement and preparations began for its implementation. The first stage was a seven-month period of UN administration, under the aegis of UNTEA (United Nations temporary Executive Authority, aided by a military contingent, UNSF (United Nations Security Force) which commenced on 1 October 1962. On 1 May 1963 the administration was handed over to Indonesia, on condition that the papuans no later than 1969 would be allowed a referendum, arranged by Indonesia and overlooked by the UN, about their political future.69 The day after the transfer there was a huge bonfire in the main square of the capital, presided over by Indonesia’s Minister of Culture. Artefacts connected with Papuan life-styles, as well as school textbooks and Papuan flags, went up in flames. The next day the New Guinea Council was disbanded and replaced by an Indonesian-appointed regional assembly which included none of the Papuans who had been elected to the Council.

In the same month a Presidential decree banned all political activity in West Irian, and all political parties which did not comply with the provisions of Presidential Decree No. 7 1963, on the conditions and simplification of parties, and Presidential Regulation No. 13, 1963, on the recognition, supervision and dissolution of parties. This led in practice to a ban of all Papuan political parties, as Presidential Decree No. 7 1963 recognised only ten Indonesian-based parties, none of which existed in West Papua.70 The Indonesian commandos who had been dropped into West Papua during the military operations that had preceded the New York Agreement were reconstituted as the Kontingen Indonesia Irian Barat or Kontindo (Indonesia’s West Irian Contingent). It was commanded by Suharto, now Major-General, and Ali Murtopo, who was Suharto’s assistance for intelligence.

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67 van der Kroef, op. cit., p. 3.
69 Budiardjo and Liong, op. cit., p. 11.
Clashes between West Papuan and Indonesian troops occurred almost at once, and military oppression has since then been part of the daily life of the West Papuan population.\textsuperscript{71}

These events in West New Guinea coincided in time with the Cuban crisis. The threat of an impending nuclear war diminished the already miniscule interest of the Western world in the political status of West New Guinea. Also, perhaps surprisingly, a number of newly decolonised countries – 18 former colonies attained independence in 1960 – supported Indonesia rather than the West Papuan quest for independence. They based their position on the doctrine of \textit{uti possidetis juris}, meaning that decolonised, independent states should have as their borders the delimitation of the former colonies, thereby avoiding territorial conflicts between the new states.

Indonesian representatives made a series of statements before the UN General Assembly between 1954 and 1962 in connection with the West Irian dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands. They repeatedly emphasised that the national boundaries of Indonesia were those of the former Netherlands East Indies. In 1957 the representative of Indonesia in the UN First Committee said:

\begin{quote}
 the attempt to link West Irian with East New Guinea simply because the two territories happened to form one island would create a very dangerous precedent, for example in the case of the islands of Borneo and Timor. Indonesia has no claims on any territories which had not been part of the former Netherlands East Indies.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

This position was restated at the UN by Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Subandrio in 1961, when he, in reply to criticism voiced by some African countries concerning the agreement on West Irian, said:

\begin{quote}
 Not only have we never made any territorial claims to date, but we also categorically state that we have no intention of doing so in the future. We are not, for instance, laying claim to the other part of the island of Timor, which is now under Portuguese rule.\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

The former Belgian Congo became independent on June 30, 1960. Shortly thereafter spokesmen for the province Katanga declared that they were to form a state of their own. The anti-colonial movement's position was that Katanga was pro-West and was strongly supportive of Congo in the bloody conflict that erupted. In November 1961, the UN adopted a resolution which empowered the international body to intervene militarily in the conflict, while at the same time pressure mounted in West New Guinea. Thus, processes in the world at large, such as the Cuban crisis, the Third World adherence to the principle of \textit{uti possidetis juris} and the war in Congo/Katanga – which readily served as a warning example in Indonesia's endeavours to gain support for its stand on West New Guinea - all played into Indonesia’s hands.

Less so did Sukarno's own move in 1963, when Indonesia again embarked on a \textit{Konfrontasi} (confrontation) campaign, this time against the creation of the federation of Malaysia. The planned creation of the Malaysian federation was perceived in Jakarta as a British colonial plot, as United Kingdom and other Commonwealth forces would retain limited military presence in the new state.

\textsuperscript{71} van der Kroef, op. cit., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{73} United Nations, op. cit., p. 41.
After the Malaysian federation formally came into being in 1963, Indonesian troops carried out raids in the border regions of the new state, and British and Commonwealth troops were sent in to stop the incursions. In January 1965, when Malaysia won a seat on the United Nations Security Council, Indonesia withdrew its membership from the United Nations.

Shortly thereafter, the PKI definitively split with the Soviet Union, following a refusal of the party’s leader to attend a convention of the world’s communist parties in Moscow. The stage was now set for one of the most gruesome purges in the history of the 20th century.

The tensions built up by an aggressive foreign policy, insensitivity to regional needs, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and deteriorating economic conditions finally erupted in September 1965. On the night of 30 September 1965 a group of military officers, calling themselves Gerakan 30 September, the September 30th movement, kidnapped, and later killed, six leading army generals, occupied some strategic buildings in Jakarta and then announced the formation of a revolutionary council.

Nasution, who had escaped the kidnapping attempt, but as a result suffered from a broken ankle and, infinitely much worse, a killed 5 year old daughter, persuaded Sukarno to appoint Suharto as head of the operations against the 30th September Movement. This he did through the creation of Kopkamtib, (Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban) the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order.) The earlier mentioned special troops, then named Kesko TT, still wearing their red berets, but now operating under the acronym RPKAD (Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat, Army Para-Commando Regiment Command), were the strong arm of Kopkamtib, and quickly put down the uprising and then began a crackdown of communists in the capital, a crackdown that soon spread across large parts of the archipelago.

In the proceedings, Suharto emerged as the leading person in ABRI, the armed forces, eventually eclipsing even Nasution.

In the following months the PKI was crushed in massacres that cost between 500,000 and one million lives. The Indonesian army orchestrated the purges and provided logistical support for a systematic campaign of mass murder. Show-trials were held under army-control, and politico-religious groups were trained and armed by ABRI for the purpose of killing communists. The RPKAD were also directly involved in central Java and in the horrendous Bali killings, where RPKAD units machine-gunned, stabbed to death or cut the throats of a great number of people. Anti-communist organisations and individuals were encouraged to join in mass killings which were concentrated in Sumatra, East Java and Bali. Moslem youth groups often comprised the vanguard, especially so the youth organization of Islamic party Nahdlatul Ulama, and it’s armed wing Banser. The Islamic mass organization Muhammadiyah, after gaining condemnations of communists from Islamic scholars, engaged in aggressive propaganda campaigns and took active part in the terror in Java. Youth groups of the National Party of Indonesia (PNI), carried out many murders, especially in Bali.

The horrors were not, however, carried out by Muslims alone, in Bali the killers were zealous Hindus, in Sumatra and the Lesser Sundas many of the perpetrators were Christian vigilantes. In the words of Christian Gerlach, it was “a loose assemblage of antagonistic political forces … They did agree, above all, on one thing: killing communists.”

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74 Ibid, p. 64.
75 Encyclopedia Americana, op. cit., p. 94.
76 Ibid, p. 29.
77 Drake, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
79 Uhlin, op. cit., p. 72.
80 Gerlach, op. cit., p. 27.
81 Mehr, op. cit., 42.
82 Gerlach, op. cit., p. 38.
Indonesians had only a vague idea of what communism or Marxism entailed, victims were in reality killed for a number of reasons. In Aceh, the leftists were seen as hated infidels by the fiercely Moslem population; in North Sumatra they attracted animosity by local Bataks for supporting Javanese settlers working on state plantations. Elsewhere, or rather everywhere, they were hated through the ‘Chinese connection’; in other places for advocating land reforms. Whatever the reasons for the hatred, it resulted in countless acts of exceptional brutality:

In Vatikiotis words:

> In what must warrant as one of the bloodiest inaugurations of a new regime anywhere in the world, hundreds of thousands of rural Javanese were reportedly mowed down by the army in the early months of 1966 on suspicion of being PKI cadres. In many cases old scores were settled on a communal basis. The weapons to do so were provided by the army. The scale of the killings and the unimaginable brutality with which they were carried out, is hard for even those who witnessed it to describe.

And Christian Gerlach’s:

> It seems that only a minority were shot by the military. Most were beheaded, stabbed, or had their throats slit with knives or swords (sometimes after they had been tied up), others were hacked to death, strangled, slain with clubs or rocks, drowned, or burned or buried alive. In other cases, the armed forces delivered victims to their village communities for murder, sometimes starting with a public military execution of leaders, or villages traded victims in order not to have to slaughter neighbours.

While most of the killings were carried out by diverse groups of civilians, they could not have done so without the inspiration and direct support of the Indonesian armed forces. ABRI controlled the media and used it – especially the radio - for vicious propaganda, where communists were accused of plans to kill thousands of opponents after a coup, with mass-graves already dug in preparation for those on their lists. The propaganda also aroused already existing anti-Chinese sentiments, in high-lighting PKI’s increasingly close ties with China, and in general depicted leftist views as un-Indonesian. Show-trials were held under army-control, and politico-religious groups were trained and armed by ABRI for the purpose of killing communists.

However, the power of the military had its limits. It was divided, the central government was weak, and it lacked the manpower to control or subjugate the wide-spread archipelago. It was thus of great importance to create ties with groups which were willing, and had the ability to, act on it’s behalf as an extended arm. The use of militia groups to serve political and military interests goes back a long way in Indonesia. In colonial times, criminal jago and preman groups were used by the authorities to check the population at large, and during the struggle against the Dutch, lasykar groups “occupying a position at the margins of political

83 Ibid, p. 21.
85 Gerlach, op. cit., p. 35.
86 One para-military force, RPKAD (Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat, Army Para-Commando Regiment Command) was directly involved in the Bali killings. RPKAD was later to develop first into Kopassandha and then Kopassus, special forces units of the Indonesian armed forces. Under both names, the unit gained notoriety during the later occupation of East Timor.
power and criminality” were used to inflict terror on the enemy. Terror was the method of choice for the lasykar, as it was for the jago and preman. In post-colonial times, and especially so from 1965 onwards, preman came to attain the meaning of youth gangs in service of political, military or economic elites; harassing or even murdering their employers opponents, and generally instigating violence and chaos. Public executions, rape, decapitations etc. were used to eliminate foes and intimidate others from even thinking of becoming ‘foes’.

In the attempt to quell the Darul Islam uprising (cf. above) Nasution had, inspired by Mao Zedong’s ideas of ‘people’s war’ used local militias against the rebellion, and also used the tactic of pagar betis (fence of legs), where the local populations were driven against the rebels, in order to corner and destroy them. Traditions such as these were combined and used to terrifying effects in 1965 and, as we shall see presently, spread to East Timor after 1975.

Apart from the outright killings, more than one million Indonesians were jailed, accused of being involved with the PKI. Hundreds of thousands of them were held for up to 14 years, without ever being officially charged or tried by a court. This was made possible by an Anti-Subversion Law, which was used to justify detention without trial, as the law “permits the prosecution and conviction of anyone whose words or actions can be construed as disruptive of public order, or critical of Pancasila, the government, its institutions or its politics.”

In spite of the great number of victims, the killings lasted only for a few months in late 1965-early 1966. By late December 1965 killings in East Java and Bali were under control of the army, by January the same could be said in Central Java and North Sumatra. This meant not the end of killings, but killings proceeded on a vastly reduced scale. Most of the large-scale killings in Indonesia had ended by March 1966. And, as Christian Gerlach points out, while many leftists were killed, most of them survived. According to Gerlach, the violence continued as long as the motives and interests of the various groups involved overlapped and coincided. Once they diverged, violence decreased. One major reason for the reduction of killings may, according to Gerlach, have been the struggle for central political power between Suharto and Sukarno and their respective followers, which brought political and military focus back to Jakarta. Once Suharto gained the upper hand, and attained a firm grip of political as well as military affairs, the situation stabilized under a ‘New Order’.

Sukarno’s power was weakened by the crisis, his popularity was at an all-time low, and Suharto used the situation to strengthen his hand. On March 11, 1966, Suharto and his supporters in the military forced Sukarno to issue a Presidential Order in which Sukarno yielded all executive powers to Suharto in order to restore peace. Sukarno’s power was progressively diminished, until finally, on 22 February 1967, he was officially removed from power, and Suharto was sworn in as President. This meant a thorough re-orienting of Indonesian politics, internally as well as externally; where the external politics meant a skillful adaptation to Cold War realities, in which the big powers could be played out against each other. In the context of the Cold War, the developing countries represented objects of competition for the two superpowers. In spite of their relative weakness, some former colonies were able to use this position to their advantage. One way to do this was “non-alignment”, meaning not to commit politically or militarily to neither side in the Cold War, but always retaining the possibility to do so; or in Gaddis words “to tilt without topping.” In Indonesia, this in-between policy was called mendayung antara dua karang, i.e. “rowing between two reefs”. The above-mentioned Bandung Conference was in 1961 followed by a meeting in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, where the Non-Aligned movement was founded.

89 Gerlach, op. cit., p. 69.
90 Gaddis, op. cit., p. 124.
91 Hook & Spanier, op. cit., p. 74.
was, together with Yugoslavia’s Tito, India’s Nehru, Nasser of Egypt and Nkrumah of Ghana, one of ‘the founding fathers’. Following Suharto’s rise to power, Indonesia continued its active role in the Non-Aligned movement, even though Indonesia’s tilt was from then on leaning precariously towards the West.

Suharto

In Indonesia itself, the Orde Baru (New Order) ushered in by Suharto rejected the Sukarno model of attaining national unity and integration largely through symbol wielding and revolution in favour of emphasis on political stability, order, and through economic development. The means to achieve this was the imposition of military rule, and Kopkamtib became the key institution for political and social control. Upon assuming power, and having completed the greater part of the campaign of massacres of communists, Suharto outlawed the PKI, rejoined Indonesia to the United Nations and also wound down konfrontasi with Malaysia.92 This served British interests well, as Britain’s strategic ambitions for the region, in Cold War terms, matched those of the United States – the British desired the destruction of the PKI by the army, and wished to support the army’s ascendancy accordingly. As the killings in Indonesia continued and the strength and political orientation of the new regime became apparent, so the British stance gradually softened commensurately, until eventually a solid relationship of mutual support had crystallised, paving the way for decades of British support for the Suharto dictatorship.93 The Konfrontasi was eventually resolved peacefully in August 1966.

Not surprisingly, the US and other Western powers did a similar re-evaluation of the Indonesian leadership. While it had supported the Permesta uprising against the Indonesian government in 1958, the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk had in July 1965 expressed hope for an Indonesian army-PKI confrontation. After this confrontation had actually occurred, with gruesome consequences, Australia’s Prime Minister Harold Holt made in July 1966 the observation that “with 500,000 to 1,000,000 Communist sympathizers knocked off, I think it is safe to assume a re-orientation has taken place.”94

92 Drake, op. cit., p. 49.
93 Mehr, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
94 Gerlach, op. cit., p. 78.
Up until this point, the weaponry of post-colonial Indonesia had to a large extent been of Soviet origin. The added demands borne out of a country run by generals, and the political re-orientation this resulted in led to a re-orientation also when it came to suppliers of arms. According to Gerlach, Sweden, through the Bofors company, supplied Indonesia with $10,000,000 US worth of small arms and ammunition in December 1965, but turned down another order in late January 1966.\(^95\) This was only a temporary disappointment for Suharto and his generals. Within a decade, eager suppliers, including Sweden, would be knocking on the doors of the new, bloodstained, Indonesian regime, when it had firmly established itself as a trustworthy ally of the West in the Cold War scenario and a reliable customer to boot.

To sum up the international implications for Indonesia of the mass-murders in 1965-66:

To the Indonesian military-business mafia that eliminated its rivals in 1965-66, the Cold War provided a national space, an opportunity to proceed with mass violence minimally challenged by any international objections. Global realpolitik from the 1960s to the 1980s meant that Suharto’s Indonesia – too important to be offended – was wooed from all sides … Socialist countries too, were, above all, talking business and pursued national interests … be it the Soviet Union, East Germany or China.\(^{96}\)

**Indonesia under Suharto – a New Order**

State dominance over society was a characteristic of the New Order. The Indonesian state was to be present in almost all spheres of everyday life, down to village leaders who controlled and monitored almost all activities. Letters of recommendation from military and civilian officials were necessary for people who applied for work, enrolled in high school or applied for passports.\(^{{97}}\) In contrast to Sukarno’s mobilisation of people for various patriotic causes, the New Order, through its army-controlled Bakin, *Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara*, State Intelligence Co-ordinating Body, discouraged political activity.\(^{98}\) In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Ali Murtopo was its Deputy Head, Bakin went far beyond an intelligence gathering role, and was notorious for its “black operations”.\(^{99}\) Bakin will later play a central role in this story. The doctrine of the *Dwi Fungsi* (Dual Function) of the armed forces, *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI), was introduced in 1965, defining their role as both a military force and a socio-political force. Since then the army justified its continued domination of the state on the grounds that civilians need the strong leadership that only the army can provide. Many military leaders hold positions as governors, ambassadors, secretary-generals of government departments, and managing directors of state firms.\(^{100}\) A member of the army was placed in every settlement down to the smallest hamlet, ensuring almost total control over the population by ABRI.\(^{101}\) It was all part of a philosophy of *Ketahanan Nasional* (National Resilience) and *Sistem Hankamrata* (short for Sistem Pertahanan Meanmanan Rakyat Semesta, the Total People’s Defence and Security System) which was linked together and overseen by the military through *Dwi Fungsi*. A range of militia-type organisations with varying degrees of legality and support from and links to the military were created to support

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\(^{95}\) Ibid, pp. 82-83.

\(^{96}\) Gerlach, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

\(^{97}\) Uhlin, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

\(^{98}\) Drake, op. cit., p. 52.

\(^{99}\) Vatikiotis, op. cit., p. 229.

\(^{100}\) Ibid, p. 49.

\(^{101}\) Uhlin, op. cit., p. 53.
this system. These organisations will be seen to play important, and often deadly, roles later in this book.

In July 1971 the army-sponsored Golkar (Golongan Karya) party won the second Indonesian election, by using intimidation and threats against opponents and generally employing fraudulent election campaign techniques. Immediately after the new Parliament was installed the military forced the representatives of the political parties to form only two political factions. The representatives of the four Moslem parties had to join the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party), and the representatives of the five non-Moslem parties had to join the PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party). By doing so the military was able to exert more effective control over the activities of the political parties.

It would, however, be incorrect to view the whole Indonesian military complex as politically powerful during the Suharto era. Though very powerful in the implementation of day-to-day administration, the army had little to say in policy formation. Power was instead concentrated in about a dozen key persons close to Suharto; each of whom controlled tightly organised pyramids of authority.

The ‘floating mass’ doctrine was introduced, forbidding political activities at the village level. The population should be ‘a floating mass’ which concentrates on economic development and does not take part in politics. Only the Golkar party was allowed to work at village level. Sukarno’s concept of Panca Sila lived on, but was now reinterpreted as an ideological tool in support of the New Order. Government propaganda was spread through compulsory indoctrination courses on Panca Sila, and all individuals and social organisations in Indonesia had to accept Panca Sila as their ideological base.

All major western governments established close economic ties with Suharto’s Indonesia. The Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI), with the USA, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and almost all Western European governments as members, was set up in 1967 on the initiative of Japan, Indonesia’s chief trading partner and primary source of capital investment. It met annually in the Netherlands to co-ordinate economic support for the regime on the basis of the assessments and advice of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Within a decade of Suharto’s coming to power, Indonesia was an oil-producing state, spending much of the revenues on infrastructure, including basic health and education facilities. The New Order derived its legitimation from ‘developmentalism’, i.e. the emphasising of economic development, measured as economic growth. The average growth rate of the Indonesian economy during the first five-year development plan was an impressive 8.4 per cent. Poverty in Indonesia was drastically reduced. Indonesia became almost self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs, and basic health and education facilities were available at every level of society.

So, the New Order state in Indonesia that emerged after 1965 was successful in bringing about development in an economic sense, but it did so at a cost of strict coercion and tight control of the population. Robinson points out a number of certain distinctive features that not only had the aim to achieve this coercion and control, but also in hindsight lay behind the invasion and brutal oppression of East Timor, in 1975 and onwards:

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104 Jenkins, op. cit., p. 20.
105 Uhlin, op. cit., pp. 80-81.
106 Budiardjo and Liong, op. cit., p. 8.
107 Ibid.
108 Drake, op. cit., p. 149.
109 Vatikiotis, op. cit., p. 4.
• The first was the power of the military, in particular the army, through the above-mentioned system of dwi-fungsi. This power manifested itself most clearly in the army's territorial structure, in a network of military forces which was spread out all over the territory, from the top levels of society down to village level.

• A number of centrally commanded elite military units were used to crush perceived security threats in potentially troubled areas. One such unit, Kostrad (Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat, or Army Strategic Forces Command) had been established before the 1965 coup, and was at that time led by Suharto. Another was Kopassandha, later to be named Kopassus. Both these organisations were accused of serious human rights violations, and a reputation for expertise not only in methods of unconventional warfare, but also for brutality and abuse of authority. The name Kopassus soon became synonymous with the practice of torture, extrajudicial killing, and the deliberate use of terror against rebel groups and civilians alike.

• There existed a pervasive domestic intelligence network, controlled by the armed forces. That apparatus operated formally through the Ministry of Defence and Security, and extended through the territorial structure to every village and neighbourhood in the country. Among those units were the above-mentioned Bakin and the informal “Special Operations” outfit, Opsus, which conducted covert operations for the president. It also included Kopassandha/Kopassus, which operated its own intelligence network, and tended to dominate intelligence operations in areas considered troubled. Intelligence officers and officers with intelligence backgrounds, were disproportionately well represented in positions of power within the army, and invariably had the attention of the president.

As can be deduced by the above, the New Order state was extremely intolerant of dissent, in the shape of - real or perceived - threats from resurgent Communism, extremist religious movements or regional rebellions. A military doctrine of ‘total people’s defense’, a legacy of the guerilla struggle against the Dutch, called for the close cooperation of regular military forces and the civilian population in defending the country against both internal and external threats. The doctrine provided the rational for the mobilization of a wide variety of official and semiofficial gangs, militia groups, and paramilitary units. Such groups were after 1965 systematically integrated into the state apparatus, ready to be deployed in a coordinated fashion under strict army control. They were frequently used to intimidate political opponents, provoke violence to achieve political ends (especially around election time), and take part in military operation aimed at detaining or killing alleged opponents of the regime. In the post-1965 period, both the military and the militias adopted far more brutal repertoires of action. One of the clearest examples of this pattern was the so-called pagar betis (fence of legs) tactic, first used against Darul Islam in the early 1950s, in which civilians were made to form a protective boundary behind which army troops could safely move into rebel territory.110

The final, and perhaps most important point taken up by Robinson, and one which I like to emphasize, is the following:

The coup and massacre 1965 also marked a normative and legal turning point, in the sense that such strategies were implicitly legitimized, not only because they were carried out by state authorities and their allies, but also because they were never punished.111

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111 Ibid, p. 44.
Thus, impunity was a key element which helped to institutionalize human rights violations – from ‘mere’ harassments of suspected political opponents to mass killings – during the New Order.

Suharto also chose to co-operate with the UN and complete the implementation of the August 1962 agreement on West New Guinea which had come to a halt when Sukarno had decided to leave the world body. In 1967 Suharto announced that an Act of Free Choice would take place in West New Guinea in 1969. The UN Secretary General appointed Ortiz Sanz, a Bolivian diplomat, to observe the Act. The Act of Free Choice was to be exercised by eight regional councils made up of 1,025 local representatives, consulting together in accordance with the Indonesian method of *musyawarah*, ‘reaching consensus’. Sanz made several attempts to have the Act conducted by universal suffrage, but the idea was rejected by Indonesia, as was a proposal for a mixed system, with the one-man one-vote principle in urban districts and collective consultations in the interior of the territory. The Indonesians claimed that the Papuans were ‘too primitive’ or ‘too simple’ for universal suffrage.112

Between 14 July – 2 August 1969, all eight councils met and decided, one by one and without a dissenting vote, to remain with Indonesia. During this period, the UN never had more than 16 representatives on the ground in West New Guinea. The UN presence was thus for all practical reasons a merely symbolic one. It was reported that six council members were killed by outraged compatriots when the result was made public. Two weeks later, a Dutch correspondent quoted a Papuan clergyman who was one of the council members:

> The man who totally destroyed my self-respect was Ali Murtopo. For two hours this special envoy of President Suharto spoke to us. He destroyed any will we may have had to vote against integration with Indonesia. He began by pointing out that Indonesia ... is able to strike fear into any country. Jakarta was not interested in us as Papuans but in West Papua as a territory. If we want to be independent, he said ... we had better ask God if He could find us an island in the Pacific where we could emigrate. We could also write to the Americans. They had already set foot on the moon and perhaps they would be good enough to find us a place there. Murtopo impressed upon us that short shrift would be made of those who voted against Indonesia. Their accursed tongues would be torn out, their full mouths would be wrenched open. Upon them would fall the vengeance of the Indonesian people, among them General Murtopo, who would himself shoot the people on the spot.113

On 19 November 1969 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which proposed West New Guinea’s integration into Indonesia ‘taking note’ of the report by Ortiz Sanz on the conduct of the Act of Free Choice.114 The Indonesian Government again changed the name of the territory, this time to Irian Jaya (Greater Irian).

The suppression of the rights of the Papuan people, as well as the extraction of the vast natural resources, continues, as does resistance under the clandestine *Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, OPM, Free Papua Movement. Unlike the situation in East Timor after 1975 this is today seen by the UN as an internal Indonesian affair. It is also seen by many as perhaps the biggest blot on the history of the United Nations.

113 Budiardjo and Liong op. cit., p. 25.
The UN establishes the right to self-determination

Portugal’s overseas empire played a dual role during Estado Novo. On the one hand, it played an ideological role, as a component of the nationalism with which Salazar tried to keep together the political forces which had placed him in power. On the other hand, there was an attempt to maximize the economic utility of the empire.115 Regarding the ideological role, the gap between rhetoric and realities was to reach absurd proportions in the 1960s, and, at the same time, the economic role of the colonies turned into a burden. Portugal’s claim to be non-racist also appeared increasingly absurd. The official view was that anyone in the colonies could assimilate Portuguese civilization and be regarded as equal to the Portuguese by birth, i.e. Africans could become Portuguese through the medium of the Catholic religion and the Portuguese language.116 The Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre formulated in his writings from the 1930s onwards an ideology, Luso-tropicality, in defense of Portugal’s clinging to its colonies. Freyre hailed Portugal as superior colonists compared with other European countries, and saw what he perceived as the Portuguese success in the tropics as largely due to the Portuguese less ethnocentric than Christo-centric expansion.117 In line with these ideas, Franco Nogueira, Foreign Minister of Portugal, formulated Portugal’s official view in 1967:

We alone, before anyone else, brought to Africa the notion of human rights and racial equality. We alone practiced the principle of multi-racialism, which all now consider to be the most perfect and daring expression of human brotherhood and sociological progress. . . . Our African provinces are more developed, more progressive in every respect than any recently independent territory in Africa south of the Sahara, without exception.118

Basil Davidson, leading British historian and Africanist, in his reaction to the above statement writes: “Even the soberest of researchers, when confronted with language like this, may be inclined to clutch wildly at his hair and wonder if words in Portugal can possibly be thought to mean what they mean elsewhere.” 119 Marcelo Caetano, who succeeded Salazar as Prime Minister of Portugal in 1970, stated the following while teaching as a professor at the University of Coimbra in 1954:

The blacks in Africa must be directed and organized by Europeans but are indispensable as auxiliaries… [and] must be regarded as productive elements organized or to be organized in an economy directed by the whites.120

And in 1960, Cardinal Cerejeira, a stalwart of Salazar’s regime wrote:

We need schools in Africa, but schools in which we show the native the way to the dignity of man and the glory of the Nation that protects him … We want to teach the natives to write, to read and to count, but not make them doctors.121

115 Gervase Clarence-Smith, “Planters and Smallholders in Portuguese Timor in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.” In Indonesia Circle, No. 57, London, 1985, pp. 15-16.
118 de Sousa Ferreira, op. cit., p. 11.
120 Ibid.
As for the Portuguese claim that Africans could assimilate Portuguese civilization and thereafter enjoy the same rights as other Portuguese, this was for all practical reasons out of reach for the vast majority. 30,000 out of a population of 4 million Africans in Angola counted as *assimilados* in 1950; in Mozambique they were a miniscule 4,300 out of 5.6 million, and a mere 11,500 out of 503,000 in Guinea.\(^{122}\)

A confrontation with the world at large became unavoidable after W.W.II when Portuguese emigration to Angola soared. From about 44,000 in 1940, the white population was past 179,000 by 1960, leading to dire social consequences for the black population as even jobs of low status now began to be filled by poor white immigrants.\(^{123}\)

The age of European empires that had begun five centuries earlier, had by then expired. Between WWII and 1960, most former colonies had become independent, in Asia by the beginning of the 1950s, in Africa about 10 years later. There were some notable exceptions. One such was French Indochina, where the French, supported by the USA, conducted a military struggle against superior communist forces. They were defeated and forced to withdraw in 1954, but the USA maintained a satellite regime in the southern part of a divided Vietnam, and eventually dispatched a great number of ground forces there in 1965. The final result was a humiliating withdrawal in April 1975, after a war which formed the background to much of global politics for a decade, and caused devastation in Vietnam itself. The French then resisted in a bitter war the struggle for independence in Algeria between 1954-1962, and again lost. It became clear to the old empires that the voluntary granting of formal independence with continuing economic and cultural dependence, i.e. neo-colonialism, was clearly preferable to costly military struggles against nationalist movements that, if lost, would in all likelihood result in a left-wing, anti-Western government. Portugal continued to resist, since its’ relatively backward economy could not afford neo-colonialism. It needed to exploit its African resources and the only way the country could do so was through direct control. The result was that Portugal, together with the white regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa, in the 1960s increasingly became an international pariah.

International pressure against Portugal manifested itself most clearly in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Before Portugal became a member of the UN in 1955 there was opposition to its joining from many countries. The decree of 1951 which changed Portugal’s ‘colonies’ into ‘overseas provinces’ is generally regarded as being a preparatory measure for joining the United Nations. Upon admission to the UN Portugal was immediately confronted with the requirement of submitting regular reports on its non-self-governing territories under section 73(e) of Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

Article 73 obliges those members ‘which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government, to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions’.\(^{124}\) Portugal’s response to the requests to supply such information was to maintain that it did not administer territories which fall under the category indicated by article 73.

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\(^{122}\) Ibid, pp. 114-115.


The persistent refusal of Portugal influenced the subsequent elaboration by the UN of the right to self-determination. A turning point was the adoption by the UN General Assembly in December 1960 of Resolution 1514 (XV) and 1541(XV). Resolution 1514, ‘the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples’, provided all peoples with the right to self-determination, resolution 1541 reaffirmed the reporting requirements of article 73(e) of the UN Charter. It also provided that self-government could be achieved by any of the following three means:

(a) Emergence as a sovereign independent State;
(b) Free association with an independent State; or
(c) Integration with an independent State.125

Furthermore, in resolution 1514 the United Nations stated that ‘repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence’, and that immediate steps shall be taken to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.126

Resolution 1514 (XV) rebuts any suggestion that a lack of economic viability is grounds for delaying independence to a non-self-governing territory. Paragraph Three specifically provides that ‘inadequacy of political, economic, social, and educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence’.127

The conditions set forth by the General Assembly for a legitimate and genuine expression of will to integrate with a sovereign state in Principle IX of Resolution 1541 (XV) provides that:

a) The integrating territory should have attained an advanced stage of self-government with free political institutions, so that its peoples would have the capacity to make a responsible choice through informed and democratic processes.

b) The integration should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the Territory’s peoples acting with full knowledge of the change in their status, their wishes having been expressed through informed and democratic processes impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage. The United Nations could, when it deems it necessary, supervise these processes.128

Portuguese Africa explodes

For the literate few in the Portuguese African possessions, the democratic victories of W.W.II contributed to a refinement of their understanding of the colonial situation. In the short term, Portugal’s creation of a small assimilated elite was useful to the colonial masters, but as the assimilados gradually became aware of the inherent contradictions in the system, it backfired on the Portuguese. Nobody analyzed the middle position of the native petty bourgeoisie better than Amilcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau:

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126 Franck and Hoffman, op. cit.
128 Ibid., p. 13.
They limit their intercourse with the masses and at the same time try to become integrated with that minority, often to the detriment of family or ethnic bonds and always at personal cost. But, whatever the seeming exceptions, they do not succeed in crossing the barriers imposed by the system. They are prisoners to the contradictions of the social and cultural reality they live in, for they cannot escape, under ‘colonial peace’, their condition as a marginal or ‘marginalized’ class…. it is precisely the assimilados (whom Portugal used as compliant assistants in domination) who question the colonizer’s culture. Frustrated in his aspirations, the assimilado tries to regain his identity, and can do so only by reverting to the masses from which he comes. Needing to identify with the subject people, the indigenous petite bourgeoisie deny that the culture of the ruling power is superior to theirs, as claimed … his opposition turns into conflict (concealed or open) the prelude to the movement of pre-independence or struggle for liberation from the foreign yoke.129

Cabral’s anti-colonial vision included a wish to ‘decolonize’ Marxism itself, specifically so of its European notion of class struggle as the necessary root of progress. He argued that Marxism needed to broaden its perspective, to include also pre-class societies, such as his native Guinea-Bissau. Cabral’s thoughts were later to have great impact, not the least in Portuguese Timor in 1974-1975.130

The earliest clear manifestation of African anti-colonial protest was Mensagem, a cultural journal launched in 1948 by a small group of assimilados in Luanda. In 1951, another group, while university students in Portugal, secured permission to form Centro de Estudos Africanos (the Centre for African Studies), in which they took up the study of African languages while discussing how they might ‘re-Africanise’ themselves.131 In the words of Angolan Mário de Andrade, who together with fellow Angolan Agostinho Neto and Amílcar Cabral (all future independence leaders) were among the founders the Centre for African Studies:

We summoned up the image of our dominated countries and so became conscious of our culture; and then came the necessity of forming political movements. It can thus be affirmed that, quite evidently, this re-Africanization of minds which had expressed itself in resisting assimilation had, since the end of the war, opened the way for or the formation of nationalist organizations.132

The only Portuguese ready to consider independence for the colonies were members of the clandestine Communist party, and it was through contacts with the communists that the early nationalists found their way to Marxist forms of analysis.133 By the end of the 1950s – early 1960s a number of movements – all of them ‘leftist’ to varying degree - had begun to take shape towards a direct challenge to colonial authority. Some were quickly suppressed, but a few managed to survive, among them PAIGCC (Partido Africano de Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde, The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, The People's Movement for the Liberation of

129 de Sousa Ferreira, op. cit., p. 122.
132 (Quoted in de Ferreira, op. cit., p. 124)
133 Crowder, op. cit., p. 767.
Angola), and Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, The Mozambique Liberation Front).  

In January 1959, police broke up an African meeting for which no permit had been obtained in the Belgian Congo capital of Léopoldville. Furious crowds rushed into the Belgian quarters and the Belgian authorities sent in their colonial militia, who shot and killed women and children as well as men. In Angola, the Portuguese authorities were panicked by the events in Léopoldville and a wave of arrests followed.  

In August 1959 a strike of dock workers in Guinea Bissau, organised by PAIGC, led to a violent military reaction by the Portuguese authorities with at least fifty left dead, and in June 1960 a large gathering of peasants who had assembled at Mueda in Mozambique, was fired upon, with several hundred killed. In the same month a demonstration in Angola in support of the arrested nationalist leader Agostinho Neto was dissolved by the police and army. Again, a large number of people were killed. On 4 February 1961, when most of the MPLA leaders in Luanda were in prison, there was an attack made in a failed attempt to free them. The attack was followed on 10 February by a raid on another Luanda prison. It resulted in seven deaths and a violent Portuguese retaliation. Civilian vigilantes assisted by police organised nightly slaughters in the black areas, hauling Africans from their huts and killing them.  

On 15 March 1961 the Africans in Angola replied with the greatest massacre of whites in the history of Africa south of the Sahara. Within a short time over 1,000 Europeans, including women and children, were killed. The Portuguese retaliated with the massacre of some 30,000 Africans. On the other side of the Indian Ocean, Goa was lost when Indian troops entered the Portuguese territory on 18 December 1961. The Portuguese garrison surrendered after very little fighting. Salazar at first refused the 3,000 soldiers to return to Portugal, on the grounds that they had dishonoured Portugal.  

The end of Estado Novo  

Following the uprisings Portugal introduced what it called ‘far reaching reforms’ in the territories. The most important was the repeal of the Native Statute, the legal distinction between indígena and não indígena in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau (which had been done with regard to Timor and São Tome in 1953). In the view of the UN, the reforms did not bring about any significant changes in political, economic, social or educational conditions.  

While Portuguese officials claimed to be restoring confidence and harmony within Angola, the uprising there had already encouraged a growth in nationalist sentiment in Portugal’s other African colonies. Armed struggle began in Guinea-Bissau in 1963, and in Mozambique the following year. By 1967 Portugal’s annual defence expenditure amounted to more than forty per cent of its total public expenditure. Parallel to the situation in Africa, and eventually

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134 Ibid, p. 768.  
135 Davidson, op. cit., p. 166.  
137 Ibid, p. 771.  
138 During these events, the exiled rebels of the 1959 uprising in Portuguese Timor were also imprisoned in Luanda.  
141 Hill, op. cit., p. 32.
incongruous to it, there were developments of an economic and political nature in Portugal itself. Portugal gained membership to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960, and there was a renewed mass emigration to Europe and America. There was also a flow of investment capital from trans-national corporations and rapid industrial growth in Portugal itself, and a tourist bonanza in the Algarve region. Remittances, tourist earnings and net investment flows became increasingly important, while the colonies were becoming a block to the planned integration in the European Economic Community, and a liability in its trade with Third World countries. It is in this context that one has to see the impact of the wars. Compulsory military service was increased to four years while morale declined. The African guerrillas simply crossed over into neighbouring independent states when they were pressed.

No permanent victory was in sight in a war which caused Portuguese deaths and injuries, seemingly for no good reason at all.\textsuperscript{142} Salazar died in 1970. He was succeeded by Marcelo Caetano, who tried to save Estado da Índia from total collapse. He introduced in 1971 an ‘Organic Law for the Overseas Territories’, and there were changes in the Portuguese constitution in 1972. The new legislation was designed to allow the overseas provinces greater autonomy ‘without affecting the unity of the nation.’ Angola and Mozambique were designated as ‘states’ and their legislative assemblies given some minor powers. But in the other five territories, including Timor, statehood was not granted and total power remained in the hands of the Governor.\textsuperscript{143} Another reform, intended to placate both the population of Portugal and its colonies as well as the highly critical world at large, was that the secret police, PIDE, was restyled Direção Geral de Segurança, DGS, and its methods became less harsh. In Timor, a new Legislative Assembly with twenty members was formed, but only half of its members were elected, and its role remained advisory. At the elections for this assembly in 1973, 11,052 people voted, as compared to 1,892 in 1957. As the population by then was about 670,000 this was not much of a sign of democracy.

Estado da Índia was now, simply, too much of an anachronism. Real change, as opposed to cosmetic, could not be stopped. The change was generated from within Portugal’s armed forces by a group who called themselves Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA), the Armed Forces Movement, formed in October 1973 by two hundred officers, all of whom with at least one tour of duty in Africa. By the beginning of 1974 its members had drafted a programme demanding immediate independence for Portuguese colonies and complete democracy in Portugal.\textsuperscript{144} By then, Guinea Bissau had unilaterally proclaimed independence, after waging a ten-year war against Portugal. Since 1965 PAIGC had been supported by Cuba with military instructors, infantry specialists, doctors etc., and from 1973 also by the Soviet Union with surface-to-air missiles, which proved disastrous for the Portuguese tactic of helicopter-borne attacks on liberated areas.\textsuperscript{145} On 25 April 1974 the MFA assumed power in Lisbon, in the so-called Carnation Revolution. The great majority of the Portuguese people saw them as liberators, and the transfer of power occurred peacefully.\textsuperscript{146} After the coup all political parties were allowed except for the fascists, censorship was ended and the secret police was dissolved. On 15 May 1974 a provisional government was formed by the MFA, with General Antonio Spínola – who had served time as governor and commander-in-chief in Guinea Bissau between 1968-1973 - as President and with socialists and communists in the cabinet.\textsuperscript{147} The new government accepted its duties under UN Chapter XI of the UN Charter (see above) and adopted, on 24 July 1974, a constitutional amendment recognising the Portuguese

\textsuperscript{142} Clarence-Smith, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
\textsuperscript{143} Hill, op. cit., p. 36.
\textsuperscript{145} Gleijeses, op. cit., pp. 185-195.
territories’ right to self-determination and independence. Spinola, however, opposed a sudden withdrawal from the colonies. His favoured solution was a cease-fire with the African movements, followed by referendums in which each colony would decide its future, including the option of remaining attached to Portugal.

This led to direct conflict with the MFA, and the ruling junta fell. The second provisional government had much greater MFA representation. Spinola remained as President, but the MFA was now in a position to overrule him. On September 10, 1974 Portugal recognized Guinea-Bissau’s independence, and signed an agreement with Frelimo, in which Mozambique was granted independence in June 1975. Angola was a different matter. Three liberation movements – the earlier mentioned MPLA, FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and Unita (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), fought bitterly between them, with the combatants looking to the United States (FNLA, Unita), the Soviet Union (MPLA), and China (FNLA, Unita) for support. All three movements were based around one of the three major ethnic groups in the country, but MPLA differed from the others in that the leaders thought in terms of class rather than ethnicity.

On January 15, 1975, the Alvor agreement between Portugal and the three Angolan liberation movements was signed, according to which a Portuguese high commissioner, assisted by representatives from all three parties, would govern Angola until independence on November 11, 1975. Shortly after, violence broke out again, and in July the MPLA expelled the FNLA from Luanda after having received weapons from Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The FNLA troops were already being trained by the Chinese in Zaire, and US President Gerald Ford now approved covert aid to FNLA and Unita, while Cuban military instructors, weapons and equipment poured into Angola to assist MPLA. On October 14, South Africa invaded from the south, with a troop composed mainly of more than 1,000 black Angolans, led by a small number of white South African soldiers. The Chinese instructors in Zaire left, not wanting to be associated with the South African invasion. On November 10, 1975, the Portuguese high commissioner announced that he was transferring sovereignty to the Angolan people, and a few hours later MPLA leader Augustino Neto proclaimed the independence of The People’s Republic of Angola. As a response, FNLA and UNITA (though still bitter enemies) announced the formation of a Democratic People’s Republic of Angola with a temporary capital at Huambo.

Cuban military kept pouring in, and by late December they had stopped the South African advance, and began instead, in Operation Carlota, to force the invaders to retreat. There was no possibility, in the aftermath of Vietnam, of direct American military intervention, and further covert funding for the pro-American FNLA was stopped by the Senate, wary of abuses in Chile and other parts of the world. During early 1976, Western countries one after the other recognized the MPLA government and on March 27, the South African troop was finally chased back across Angola’s southern border. Angola was liberated, but torn with internal strife and largely bereft of skilled people, since 90% of the Portuguese had left the country.

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148 Clark, op. cit., p. 5.
149 In February 1974 Spinola published a book in which he stated that the colonial wars could not be won. He proposed instead that Portugal establish a ‘Lusitianian Commonwealth’, consisting of Portugal, the colonies and Brazil, with ‘progressive autonomy’ for its consisting parts. The first edition of 50,000 copies sold out in a day.
150 Nicol, op. cit., p. 171.
151 Gleijes op. cit., pp. 233-345. Post-independence, Angola entered a period of civil war that lasted up until 2002 and cost about half a million lives and devastated the country’s infrastructure and economy. The war became a Cold War struggle, as both the Soviet Union and the United States, along with their respective allies, provided significant military assistance to parties in the conflict.
9 Portuguese Timor – its final years

Political parties are founded

Within three weeks of the coup in Portugal three political associations were founded in Timor.\(^1\) UDT (União Democrática Timorense, Timorese Democratic Union), was the first such association to be established in Dili, in May 1974.\(^2\) Originally UDT was led by Mário Carrascalão, but his previous involvement in União Nacional soon forced the party to transfer formal leadership to Francisco Lopes da Cruz, editor of the local newspaper ‘A Voz do Timor’. The nominal second-in-command was Augusto Cesar Mousinho, then mayor of Dili. João Carrascalão, brother of Mário, returned to Timor in early 1975 after studies in Switzerland, and soon assumed effective command of UDT. Other central committee members included administrative workers, bank employees, a Portuguese plantation owner, and government officials. The party received economic support from Dili, but its real strength was in the rural areas, where many of the ruling class Timorese wished to keep a status quo position with Portugal.\(^3\) In September 1974 UDT took a final step away from its original idea of Timor becoming an autonomous part of Portugal, and opted for independence after a period of transition from Portuguese rule.\(^4\)

Associação Socio-Democrata Timorense, the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), was the second political association to be formed. Most of the founders were members of the informal group which had met regularly in the park in front of the Government building before the coup. ASDT issued its first manifesto on 22 May 1974, stating that its political activity was to be based on the right to independence, the rejection of colonialism, the immediate participation of Timorese in the administration and local government, no racial discrimination, a struggle against corruption, and a policy of cooperation with neighbouring countries.\(^5\) Independence was to be arrived at after a preparatory period of three to eight years, after implementation of administrative, economic, social and political reforms.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Political parties were not formally allowed until August 1975, but this was a problem of a technical nature, solved by using the term ‘association’.


\(^4\) This step was inevitable, since the idea that the colonies could become autonomous parts of Portugal had disappeared even in Portugal with the downfall of general Spinola. It was clear from the beginning that Spinola and the more radical members of the MFA were on a collision course with regard to the colonial question. Spinola’s vision, as outlined in his book *Portugal and the Future*, was strongly opposed by the radicals, who wanted a rapid disassociation from the colonial past. Spinola was forced to resign as president on 30 September 1974. After a failed attempt at a comeback, by way of an abortive coup on 11 March 1975, Spinola fled to Brazil (Mats Sundgren, Stig Andersson and Jan-Olof Pettersson, *Revolution i Cirkel. Portugal 1249-1976*. Stockholm: Liber Förlag, 1976, pp. 137-148). Several new governments came and went in the next few months, but there was no longer any thought of forming the neo-colonial empire suggested by Spinola. The government(s) now wanted to get rid of the colonies as quickly as possible (Bill Nicol, *Timor. The Stillborn Nation*. Melbourne, Australia & Norwalk, Connecticut: Visa, 1978, p. 172).

\(^5\) Hill, op. cit., p. 71.

At that stage, in the words of José Ramos Horta, “Marxism was far from our minds”, with Amilcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau being the only revolutionary writer whose works anybody was familiar with.7 Cabral’s influence on the ASDT leadership was not a surprise, since Portugal’s colonialism had created similar ‘in-between’ assimilado elites in all of its overseas territories. Horta himself saw the success story of Social Democratic Sweden as a source of inspiration, rather than the Soviet Union or China.8 Francisco Xavier do Amaral, who had studied for seven years at a Jesuit-run seminary in Macau, but fell under an official cloud after expressing anti-colonialist views, became the first president of the ASDT, and Nicolau Lobato was selected as vice-president. The ASDT leaders were all Catholics, and all were junior public servants in the colonial administration. A large proportion of them came from families of liurais who had access to good education for their children, and many had studied at the primary school at Soibada and the Jesuit-run Seminary at Dare. Apart from the somewhat older Xavier do Amaral, all were born in the late 1940s. Most of them were first generation immigrants into Dili, coming from a variety of regions and ethno-linguistic groups. With their backgrounds from linguistically diverse areas, they were acutely aware of the need to overcome regional rivalries and to establish a common language. Among themselves, they communicated in Portuguese. It was thus quite natural that this language became the language of preference. To have chosen Tetun, the most widely spoken indigenous language, would have offended speakers of other Timorese languages. Also, Tetun was at this point not a written language, and thus considered underdeveloped by the ASDT founders. On his return from Macau, Xavier do Amaral set up a school at his home in Dili for children not eligible to study in the colonial system, and the early ASDT meetings were held in this location.9

In June 1974 José Ramos Horta, one of the founders of ASDT, visited Jakarta, and had a meeting with the Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik. He later received a letter from Malik which read, in part:

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. For this reason, whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence, can be assured that the Government of Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both countries.10

Horta, together with other other ASDT members, also visited the widow of Dom Boaventura, the leader of the uprising in 1912, symbolically linking the modern struggle for Timorese independence with that almost successful attempt some 62 years earlier – or at least connecting with Boaventura’s fighting spirit.

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9 Hill, op. cit., p. 81. See also Pat Walsh, Winter of the Patriarchs. ETAN, 9 May 2012.
10 Ibid, p. 96.
In September 1974 the ASDT leadership then decided to change the Association into the Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente, Revolutionary Front of an Independent East Timor (Fretilin). This also meant a shift to a more aggressive policy. The timing for independence was not changed, but the new platform called for immediate recognition by Portugal of the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence.\(^\text{11}\) This period also saw the beginning of a split between leftist radical and more moderate support for East Timor in Australia. In October 1974, Denis Freney, Australian Communist Party member and activist went to East Timor where he met some of the Fretilin leaders. Back in Sydney he formed CIET (Campaign for Independent East Timor). This created an image of a ‘leftist issue’ which later was to discourage other people from supporting the East Timor cause.\(^\text{12}\) This split between radical and moderates/pragmatics was also to cause a longstanding rift within East Timor’s resistance, both inside Timor and among the exiles. One may indeed say that the wounds caused by this split still painfully reverberates in independent East Timor’s politics at the time of writing.

The most successful political tactic employed by Fretilin to mobilise popular support was using the word ‘Maubere’. Maubere is a common name in East Timor, with its roots among the Mambai people. Through the missionaries and the Portuguese colonial officials, Maubere was transformed into a derogatory word, which came to mean stupid, lazy, etc. Soon after the formation of ASDT, José Ramos Horta, in an attempt to develop a philosophy that could best explain to the people what ASDT stood for, coined the word Mauberism, and soon Fretilin was known as ‘the party of the Maubere’.\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^{11}\) Horta 1984, op. cit., p 21.


\(^{13}\) Horta, op. cit., p. 77, see also Hill, op. cit., p. 86.
Maubere now came to attain the meaning of ‘common man’, but in a positive sense. The female equivalent to Maubere was Bibere. The attentive reader may notice the similarities with Sukarno’s concept of Marhaen. Horta was not only successful in marketing his party domestically, he was by far the most outgoing among Timorese leaders towards foreign visitors, be they journalists, politicians or mere tourists, helping building an image among many that Fretilin was by far the largest political organisation in Portuguese Timor – which may or may not have been the actual truth. In stark contrast, it seemed to at least one outside observer that it seemed almost as if UDT had something to hide, as its leaders were quite difficult to get hold of. However, the most difficult party to get access to was Apodeti.14

APODETI (Associação Popular Democrática Timorense, Popular Association of Democratic Timor), was formed by a group of some 35 people on 27 May 1974. The party was initially named AITI (Associação Para a Integração de Timor na Indonesia, Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia); but soon changed to the less obvious, and perhaps less confrontative to some, Apodeti. Apodeti wanted autonomy under Indonesia, but only to be achieved gradually, and under supervision of the UN. Apodeti preferred Indonesia to Portugal, and did not think an independent East Timor was a viable option. The general idea was of Flobamor – an autonomous province consisting of Flores, Sumba, and the whole of Timor, east and west.15 This had been, as the reader may remember, the approximate sphere of interest of the Larantrqueiros.

José Osorio Soares, General Secretary of the newly established party, told the Jakarta newspaper Tempo that Apodeti wanted to foster a greater feeling of closeness to Indonesia among the East Timorese people, firstly through the teaching of the Indonesian national language. This view was supported by, and perhaps inspired by, José Antonio da Costa, a Catholic priest and Doctor of Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. da Costa proposed that rather than having to travel to Macau or Lisbon to study, prospective pastors should be able to study in nearby Flores. He also proposed that a pastor from Indonesia should be invited to teach Bahasa to prospective pastors in Portuguese Timor, that the border between the two territories be opened and that freer trade relations be established. Apart from José Antonio da Costa, there were also other members of the Catholic clergy among those present when Apodeti was founded. While not to be directly engaged in party politics, spiritual leaders still had, according to da Costa “the task of educating the people to obey the norms as required, also in political life.”16 Also among the fundadores (founders) of the party, were several former rebels from the Viqueque uprising who had returned from exile in Africa.17

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15 Apodeti was not alone in harbouring ideas to this, or similar, effect. It has been said that El Tari, West Timor’s governor at the time, had a vision of an independent Timor, East and West together. An independent East Timor was to be a first step towards the realisation of this idea (Interview by the author with Justino Guterres, July 1995, see also José Ramos Horta, Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor. Trenton, N. J.: Red Sea Press, 1987, p. 41). As late as 1997, the concept of a “Greater Timor” (Negara Timor Raya) emerged from a seminar at the Political and Social Science faculty of the Widy Mandira Catholic University in Kupang, West Timor. This concept promoted a political entity comprising the Eastern Lesser Sundas (Nusa Tenggara Timur – NTI), the islands of the Western South Moluccas (Maluku Tenggara Barat – MTB), and East Timor. Highlighting the common ethnicity, culture, religion and socio-economic problems of the Negara Timor Raya area, the movement sought to accelerate the development of the region. The movement had “a significant following among West Timor elites who are attracted to its agenda of secession from Indonesia and unification with East Timor.” Understandably, the Indonesian authorities strongly opposed this separatist movement and briefly detained the movement’s seven “proclaimers” on 8 January 2002 (Ernest Chamberlain, Faltering Steps. Independence Movements in East Timor – 1940s to the early 1970s. Point Lonsdale, Victoria: The author, 2007, pp. 157-158).
17 Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 71.
Those were not alone in harbouring ill feelings against the Portuguese. Apodeti’s grey eminence was Guilherme Gonçalves, a liurai of the border district of Atsabe who, together with two of his sons, had been jailed by the Portuguese authorities on grounds of rape, arson and murder.\textsuperscript{18} Thereby he also lost prestige among the indigenous population in favour of Kaspar Nunes of Maubara, his strongest contender of being the most powerful liurai in this part of Timor. The jailing led to Guilherme developing a deep hatred towards the Portuguese. The General Secretary José Osório Soares, who worked in the health agency, the Assistência Social, had been passed over for promotion within the Government service because of his indigenous status. The President of Apodeti, Arnaldo dos Reis Araújo, had been jailed for many years by the Portuguese because of his collaboration with the Japanese during the war.

While Guilherme Gonçalves may have been the party’s grey eminence, its ‘midwife’ was, at least according to David Hicks, Major António Carlos Arão Metelo, Estado-Maior do Comando Militar de Timor (Chief of Staff) and Chefe do Estado Maior das Forças Armadas (Chief of the General Staff of Armed Forces.) Metelo had been commissioned by President Spinola to serve as the MFA’s delegate in Portuguese Timor, and as the frontman of the new regime in Portugal he replaced Governor Fernando Alves Aldeia as the most powerful man in the territory. Metelo has explained that the reason he was supportive of Apodeti was that the Indonesian option had to be clearly presented to the Timorese so as not to provoke the Indonesian Government into undermining the process of decolonization. This strategy eventually failed in a big way, but when the Indonesian undermining was well under way some months later, Major Metelo was back in Lisbon as Vice Prime Minister in a short-lived Marxist government.\textsuperscript{19}

Stephen Ranck, who conducted fieldwork in East Timor at the time for a study about migration into Dili, writes that Apodeti members stated their basic reason for wanting to unite with Indonesia as being ‘we are of the same skin’. Some members put their arm against Ranck’s to show the difference in pigment, saying, ‘but Indonesia’s the same’. They expressed hopes for improvements under Indonesia, and bitter disillusionment with Portugal. None felt that independence was realistic. At the same time, the grass roots members stated that an Indonesian invasion was totally unacceptable and that they would resist it along with the rest. Some Timorese students joined Apodeti with hopes of taking advantage of the Indonesian government’s offer of scholarships, channelled through Osório Soares, to any Timorese student who wanted one. The Indonesian consulate, more co-operative than when the clandestine young anti-colonialists approached it a few years earlier, also offered free evening lessons in the Indonesian language for interested Apodeti members.\textsuperscript{20} Apodeti also soon began publishing a journal, O Arauto da Sunda, supported (and controlled) by Indonesian authorities, and propagated its views from radio stations in Atambua and Kupang in West Timor.\textsuperscript{21}

Ranck and file membership of Apodeti was, according to one of its leaders, never more than 3,000 people, most of whom were Guilherme Gonçalves’ followers in Atsabe. In Dili its membership consisted primarily of children of Timorese families involved in the 1959 rebellion against Portuguese rule.\textsuperscript{22}


\textsuperscript{19} David Hicks, \textit{Rhetoric and the Decolonization and Recolonization of East Timor}. New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 75-76.

\textsuperscript{20} Ranck, op. cit., p. 23.

\textsuperscript{21} Hicks, op. cit., p. 76.

Later in 1974 two other political parties were formed, Kota (Klibur Oan Timor Aswain, literally ‘sons of the mountain dogs’, its Portuguese name was Associação dos heróis Timorense, the Association of Timorese Heroes) and Partido Trabalhista, the Labour Party. Kota advocated the restoration of the kingdoms which had been divided by the Portuguese after the 1912 rebellion. Each local group would in traditional fashion choose a liurai from a hereditary line of males; those chosen would then select parliamentary representatives from among themselves. The parliamentary members would finally decide which liurai would be the ‘king of Timor’. This system was supposed to make do with the need for modern-style political factions. The party was initially founded as Associação Popular Monarquia do Timor (APMT), the Popular Association of Monarchists of Timor, by seven liurais who claimed to be descendants of the Larantuqueiros. It eventually came under the leadership of José Martins, who had lived outside of Portuguese Timor for more than twenty years. KOTA was never more than a minor party in the Timorese political configuration, at least if political effectiveness is the yardstick. Outside observers usually mentioned the party’s membership to be in the lower hundreds, which, however, may have been an underestimation.

If Kota was small, Partido Trabalhista was even smaller, consisting mainly of a small number of people working in a rattan factory in Viqueque. For all practical reasons, Trabalhista seems to have been more a name than a political party. For a short while there also existed a ‘party’ called Associação Democrática para a Integração do Timor-Leste na Austrália, the Democratic Association for Integration of East Timor with Australia (Aditla), which as the only point in its programme advocated asking Australia to take over Portugal’s colonial responsibilities and setting up a trust territory as in New Guinea.

The setting up of Aditla led to rumours that ships would be sent by the Australian government to offer refugees free passage from Dili in case of an Indonesian invasion. A flood of Chinese, Mestizos and Portuguese signed up and paid a fifty cent (Australian, of course) membership fee. By the end of November 1974 the group had at least 8,000 members. When the Australian government became aware of the existence of Aditla, it immediately denounced the idea in the Dili newspaper A Voz de Timor on 12 March 1975, and Aditla simply disappeared.

A dozy Australia Foreign Affairs and Defence, lacking the advantage of a consulate in Dili, instead – in an operation initiated by Gordon Jockel, director of the newly created JIO (Joint Intelligence Organisation) and assisted by ASIS (Australian Secret Intelligence Service) recruited Frank Favaro as an in situ agent. Favaro ran a pub in Dili and styled himself as Australian Consul-General. As an agent for the Australian Intelligence, his mission was mainly to keep an eye on the alleged communists who arrived back in Timor following the April 1974 revolution in Portugal. However, Favaro was eventually sacked for reasons of failing “normal desiderata for agents.”

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24 Nicol, op. cit., p. 52.
27 Hill, op. cit., p. 115.
28 Ranck, op. cit., p. 25.
29 Nicol, op. cit., p. 49.
Decolonisation – the game begins

The Junta de Salvacão Nacional established by the armed forces in Portugal in 1974 dismissed the governors of the African colonies and replaced them with men from the MFA. Timor was a different matter. Governor Fernando Alves Aldeia remained at his post for a number of months after April 1974. This was a period of great uncertainty in the colony concerning Portugal’s intentions in Timor. A joint communiqué on decolonisation, signed on 4 August 1974 by UN General Secretary Kurt Waldheim and the Portuguese government, referred to all Portuguese colonies except Timor and Macau.

After General Spinola resigned as President at the end of September 1974, General Francisco Costa Gomes implied in his inauguration speech as new President that the decolonisation scheme adopted for Angola, Guinea and Mozambique – negotiations with the liberation movements for the transfer of power and the granting of independence – was not justified in the case of Timor, São Tomé-Príncipe and Cape Verde. For these territories ‘the only common dominator is the guarantee that a freely-expressed consultation of the population would be the deciding factor’.

Soon after the transfer of Presidential power in Lisbon, with the man who advocated the creation of a ‘Lusitanian Commonwealth’ out in the wings, General Ali Murtopo, heading a delegation of top Indonesian military figures, arrived in Lisbon on 14 October for secret talks with government officials, including then Foreign Minister Mário Soares. No significant agreement regarding Timor was reached between the two sides, but various political possibilities were aired in a general way.

This coincided in time with the arrival of Apodeti’s General Secretary from Indonesia. Apodeti’s President, Arnaldo dos Reis Araújo, had gone there in mid-1974 on a mission to ask the Indonesian Government whether they would accept Portuguese Timor as part of Indonesia. He returned some four months later with a positive answer. Shortly thereafter, Osório Soares visited Indonesia himself. When he returned, the weekly Apodeti meetings held in his back yard became increasingly militant. When a member asked him if it was true that Indonesia kept 60,000 political prisoners, he replied, ‘Yes, it’s true, they’ve got 60,000 Fretilinistas locked up over there!’

The background to the aggressive tone was that Indonesia made it clear in October 1974 that East Timor would never become an independent state within an Indonesian federation. A spokesman for Suharto was quoted by Associated Press on 18 October, saying that Indonesia would accept Portuguese Timor as a province of the Indonesian nation, but not as an independent state within an Indonesian federation. This announcement was apparently a reaction to Murtopo’s talks in Lisbon, and deprived Apodeti of the validity in its stated political aim to become autonomous within the Republic of Indonesia. Isolated, Apodeti became aggressive and violent, thereby also isolating themselves from the main body of Portuguese Timor’s population. Further accentuating this, Tomás Gonçalves, the son of Guilherme Gonçalves, the liurai of Atsabe in October 1974 travelled to Jakarta, where he held

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31 Hill, op. cit., p. 84.
34 His extended stay in Indonesia depended on Jakarta’s wish to properly analyze where Portuguese Timor was headed, and Apodeti’s role in the political game. Above all, the Indonesian authorities wanted to figure out how much support Apodeti could enjoy, and to what extent Apodeti would be loyal to Indonesia (Nicol, op. cit., p. 60). Elias Tomodok, the Indonesian consul in Dili misinformed Jakarta about both these issues.
35 Nicol, op. cit., p. 71. See also Ranck, op. cit., p. 23.
meetings with ABRI representatives; returning to Timor with instructions to form a group of armed “partisans” under Indonesian army control.36

At the same time Almeida Santos, the Portuguese Minister for Inter-Territorial Coordination, visited East Timor. Fretilin, UDT and Apodeti rallied their supporters for the occasion when Almeida Santos spoke to crowds in Dili and Maubisse on 19 and 20 October. The largest sections of these rallies were those mobilised by UDT. One instance that showed evidence of the Portuguese cultural vestige mentioned earlier in this book - and different ways of interpreting it - was the display of ancient Portuguese flags by many of those in the crowds on these occasions. Almeida Santos himself interpreted these flags as being a touching symbol of Timorese friendship with Portugal, while UDT saw them as an indication of support for their policy of remaining part of a Portuguese federation – even though such a solution was now forfeited, due to political developments in Portugal. Fretilin leaders regarded it as a reflection of religious superstition, and as an indication of a lack of understanding by most Timorese of possible alternatives to Portuguese rule.37

Almeida Santos publicly concluded that what the people of Timor wished was to maintain their old ties with Portugal, perhaps in a modern form, but still in a ‘Lusitianian’ setting, i.e., the solution outlined by Spinola in his book Portugal and the Future.38 Both Santos and Spinola may have been misled by their wish to retain some of the glory of the visions contained in Camões’ poem Os Lusiadas from 1572. Ricardo Roque wryly observes that

… the Portuguese did not want Timor because of the present. They were there because of the past. The past, a mythical past of imperial glory, was, indeed, the reference. Timor was regarded as a vestige of the Golden Age of Discoveries. … The territory was and should remain Portuguese because it was part of a holy heritage of revered ancestors.39

As a result of the meetings between the Indonesian and Portuguese representatives in Lisbon a telegram was sent to Almeida Santos during his visit to Timor. It read:

In contact with the President and the Prime Minister, the Indonesian delegation led by General Murtopo stated its conviction that the only formulas acceptable for Timor’s future will be links with Portugal or Indonesia, which prejudices the independence option. In keeping with this, the Prime Minister considers it convenient for you to abstain in public declarations from giving emphasis to or even referring to the independence solution on a plane with other solutions.40

On 18 November 1974 Colonel Mário Lemos Pires replaced Governor Fernando Alves Aldeia, bringing with him a group of MFA officers who were to serve in the administration and form a Decolonisation Commission.41 Two of these, Majors Jonatas and Mota, were to be the cause of great dispute, being accused by UDT of being communists and pro-Fretilin.42

37 Hill, op. cit., p. 84.
38 Barreto, op. cit., p. 18.
42 Horta 1987, op. cit., p. 47.
Lemos Pires’ letter of commission outlined his task only in general terms of implementing the MFA programme, namely that the people should choose their own political future.43

Upon arrival to power the MFA administration supported neither a referendum in East Timor nor national elections. Some feared a situation similar to that in West New Guinea in 1969, when the Indonesian government had ensured a vote favourable to itself in a staged Act of Free Choice.44 From December 1974 the MFA administration gave each of the recognized political associations one hour per week on the government radio station. According to official figures there were 4,229 radios in East Timor; many of these belonged to liurais and were listened to by a number of households.45 Bill Nicol, the one outside observer who disagrees about the smallness of Kota, claims that the party could have attracted the largest number of supporters of any political movement in East Timor. They wanted Portugal to stay for at least fifty years, which was out of the question from the Portuguese point of view, and the Portuguese never fully recognised KOTA. Without recognition they were not allowed free access to the newspaper, A Voz de Timor, or to Rádio Dili, Nicol attributes this to Kota’s inability to compete with the recognised parties.46

On Christmas Day 1974 Cyclone Tracy, the most devastating natural event in Australian history, hit Darwin. 9,000 homes were destroyed and more than sixty people were killed. It meant that communications between Timor and the outside world for a while depended on links through Indonesia.47 It also meant that less spectacular events in Portuguese Timor attracted less interest in Australian media than they perhaps otherwise would have accrued. By then Tomás Gonçalves had succeeded in mobilizing 216 young men from the Atsabe area who had been sent to West Timor to undergo military training under the supervision of ABRI operatives. Gonçalves himself was appointed supreme commander of this force on 2 December 1975; despite this impressive title he was himself under command of ABRI Major Yunus Yosfiah.48

In early January 1975 the MFA in East Timor re-organised itself, and a campaign of conscientização política, political awareness, was undertaken in order to educate the people about the MFA programme and the choices they would have to make. Grupos Dinamizadores, ‘Dynamisation Groups’, of the army crisscrossed the country to prepare the people for local elections as a first step towards elections for a Constituent Assembly that would determine the future status of the territory.49

In the new MFA cabinet, the controversial duo Mota and Jonatas held two important portfolios. Mota was responsible for Political Affairs and for contacts with the local political movements, while Jonatas was in charge of mass media. That included the government paper A Voz de Timor and Radio Dili. When a forty-four member military council was established, in line with similar moves by the MFA in Lisbon, Mota and Jonatas were among the five man executive which was elected. The executive had the task of advising the council and the governor and Mota and Jonatas were the most senior members of the executive. When a Decolonisation Commission was established by the military council at the end of March 1975 Mota and Jonatas also came to dominate this body, leading to, in Nicol’s words, a ‘circular power base’ for the two.50

43 Barreto, op. cit., pp. 21-22.
44 Hill, op. cit., p. 120.
48 CAVR, op. cit., p. 19.
49 Horta 1987, op. cit., p. 49.
50 Nicol, op. cit., p. 183.
Fretilin was of the three main political associations the most advantageously situated to participate in the MFA’s Decolonisation Commission, and appointed representatives to all the committees of the Decolonisation Commission. UDT also co-operated closely with the MFA’s Decolonisation Commission, while Apodeti did not co-operate very much.

In February 1975 Apodeti issued a statement which claimed that the Portuguese were trying to keep Timor and not decolonise it, and a telegram to this effect was sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, President Suharto, Australia’s Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and the Secretary General of ASEAN.\(^51\)

The Chinese population as a whole, some 11,000, was increasingly nervous about the new situation, and none of the parties encouraged them to join. Quite on the contrary, they were actively warned to stay away from politics. Some politicians also made them scapegoats for Timor’s problems, and abused them for their economic dominance.

The party they most favoured was UDT, because of its lack of aggressiveness against them; UDT simply seemed to quietly accept and ignore the issue of the Chinese. The party the Chinese feared most was Fretilin, who suggested that the Chinese should be made to invest money in agriculture, rather than import consumer goods.\(^52\)

Stephen Ranck attempted to find out the reaction of the Timorese population to the new political situation. He found that beyond the party strongholds in some of the rural townships, a large number of Timorese had not yet given their allegiance to anyone. Many answered negatively to any suggestion of Indonesian rule. When asked why, the replies were usually ‘they’re no good’, or ‘they’re as poor as us’.

The most politically active in the rural areas were the Timorese traditional rulers and their families, school teachers, male nurses manning the first aid posts, and administration employees. The senior members of the ruling families leaned toward UDT while their young Dili-educated sons were more in favour of Fretilin, as were many of the school teachers and male nurses. The sympathy for UDT among the elders was largely based on the fact that UDT seemed less willing than Fretilin to change old ways, including privileges that the Portuguese had bestowed upon liurais in exchange for their keeping the subjects pacified.\(^53\) In all the rural areas visited by Ranck, nearly everyone said that the politically active were fairly evenly divided between UDT and Fretilin. Only in larger centres could people name Apodeti members.

According to Bill Nicol, the majority of Timor’s rural population, “isolated from world events by restrictive colonial policies, poor, hungry, diseased and illiterate” showed little interest in modern politics. He also points out that many were people fearful; because to discuss or criticise had always meant risking brutal reprisal, ranging from imprisonment or forced labour to death. Many also had a strong psychological attachment to Portugal, or rather to the symbolic image of Portugal as included in the local mythology.\(^54\)

In Dili the political attitudes of rank and file Timorese in both major parties were remarkably similar. When asked how soon they thought Timor could be independent, Fretilin members replied, on average, that it would take seven and a half years. Among UDT people, the average answer was ten years. The usual replies to ‘why didn’t you join Apodeti?’ were ‘we don’t want to exchange one master for another’, or ‘we’ve already had 400 years of colonialism’.\(^55\)

José Ramos Horta claimed late in 1974 that Fretilin had over 80,000 supporters. A few months later UDT leaders told James Dunn that they had some 100,000 Timorese behind

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51 Hill, op. cit., p. 120.
52 Nicol, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
53 Nicol, op. cit., p. 148.
54 Ibid.
55 Ranck, op. cit., p. 28.
them.\textsuperscript{56} While a true assessment was impossible to make, it is clear that Fretilin and UDT were the major players in Portuguese Timor. Apodeti had, as mentioned above, at the most 3,000 in its total membership. The party leadership claimed that many more were sympathetic to them but were afraid to speak out. However, Apodeti supporters interviewed by Ranck didn’t think this was true, saying instead that their neighbours were still unconvinced of Indonesia’s good intentions.\textsuperscript{57} The strength of UDT and Fretilin versus Apodeti became simply overwhelming when they formed a coalition in late January 1975, largely as a response to the aggressiveness of the Indonesian \textit{Operasi Komodo}.

A few days after, on 26 January, a massive rally of thousands of mostly traditionally clad people in front of the administration building showed their support for the KOTA party. Some were waving old Portuguese flags, others carried old documents in glass frames.\textsuperscript{58} It’s anybody’s guess whether this display reflected any following on a grand scale among the Timorese population, in Dili or in the countryside. Kota, with its archaic politics and vision of long-term continuing ties with Portugal, simply was not to have any part in the decolonisation process as far as the Portuguese administration was concerned.

\textbf{Indonesia’s reaction – \textit{Operasi Komodo}}

Indonesia responded immediately to the developments in Portuguese Timor. As we have seen, Ali Murtopo had already initiated talks with the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon in October 1974. At the time Indonesia’s Consul in Dili was Elias Tomodok. In talks with Australian Consul James Dunn in 1974, Tomodok seemed obsessed with the view that East Timor must become part of Indonesia. He had, as Dunn saw it, a grossly inflated view of the amount of general support for Apodeti and the option of integration, and Dunn believes that Jakarta must have received a distorted picture of politics in East Timor through Tomodok.\textsuperscript{59}

This distorted picture may or may not have influenced the information given in July 1974 by Harry Tjan Silalahi, Director of CSIS (Centre for Strategic and International Studies) in Jakarta, to the Australian embassy’s first secretary in Jakarta, about his proposal for a clandestine operation in East Timor to ensure it would opt for incorporation into Indonesia. “Tjan’s extreme frankness indicates the Indonesians are confident that we would favour an independent Portuguese Timor as little as they do,” wrote Australian ambassador Robert Furlonger on July 3. “They clearly expect a response from our side: a failure to do so soon will be taken by them, I fear, as a tacit agreement.”\textsuperscript{60}

Within Indonesia’s military there was a group consisting of General Ali Murtopo, the former intelligence assistant for \textit{Kontindo}, Indonesia’s West Irian Contingent, Generals Murdani and Sugama, and Admiral Sudomo, who controlled the major intelligence and security agencies, Kopkamtib and Bakin. All names familiar from the \textit{Operasi Tjendrawasih}, aimed at incorporating West New Guinea into Indonesia in the preceding chapter. This group had at their disposal the special operations unit, \textit{Opsus}, and the above-mentioned Centre for Strategic and International Studies. The group sought President Suharto’s approval to launch a subversive operation with the aim of integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{58} Nicol, op. cit., pp. 51-52.
\textsuperscript{59} Dunn, op. cit., pp. 106-107.
\textsuperscript{60} Robert Garran, ‘Tjan gave embassy full details’ In \textit{The Australian}, September 13, 2000a, p. 22.
Events in both Timor and Portugal in September 1974 strengthened the Murtopo group’s conviction that Timor should become part of Indonesia as soon as possible. In Lisbon it was a shift of the regime to the left, while in Timor ASDT became Fretilin and UDT declared itself in favour of independence after the fall of Spinola.

An event of perhaps even greater importance than the above was a meeting on 6 September 1974 between President Suharto and Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The Australian Prime Minister, accompanied by a senior Foreign Affairs official, Richard Woolcott – soon to be appointed Australia’s ambassador to Indonesia – met Suharto at Wonosobo in central Java. Whitlam is reported to have informed President Suharto that he believed the integration of East Timor with Indonesia, following an act of self-determination, was the best solution for the security and stability of the region. With this, Whitlam set out to achieve two conflicting goals, unless he firmly believed in a pro-Indonesian outcome of an act of self-determination. There can be little doubt that this meeting influenced President Suharto in his decision to give the Murtopo group his approval to launch their operation against Portuguese Timor.

Operasi Komodo, the Komodo (Dragon) operation, as it was to be called, received its green light from Suharto in October 1974. Between July and October Harry Tjan had in meetings with Australian embassy officials in Jakarta, continued to lure Australia into Indonesia’s confidence, often with extremely provocative comments about Jakarta’s military intentions regarding Timor. Another source of information was General Benny Murdani, who was in charge of the military operation. Australia was told when the special operation was under way and later also that military operations were planned.

In November 1974 the Jakarta press carried stories of Chinese ‘Maoists’ involvement in Timorese affairs, of political demonstrations funded by ‘left-wing Chinese’, and even of four Chinese generals entering Timor via Australia. The very conservative and decidedly anti-Fretilin Bishop of Dili, Dom José Joaquim Ribeiro, joined the Indonesian propaganda by spreading false rumours about “twenty-six or twenty-eight” North Vietnamese communists – posing as Chinese! -who had entered Portuguese Timor from Macau, on a mission to train Fretilin supporters. It must be remembered that the former Pope, Pius XII, had
excommunicated all members of Communist parties everywhere in the world, and Ribeiro was very much a man of that time. Ribeiro’s colleague in West Timor, Bishop Teodore van der Tillart of Atambua, in his turn informed Australian Cardinal James Knox of the same rumour.69 Knox was soon to take up a position at the Vatican, and presumably brought the view of a communist Fretilin to the very heart of the Catholic Church.

The propaganda had a negative effect in Portuguese Timor. According to Dunn the propaganda eliminated any possibility that the Timorese might be persuaded to integrate voluntarily with Indonesia.70 One unintended result was that, on 21 January 1975, an agreement of coalition was signed between UDT and Fretilin. The most important points of their new platform were:

- Total independence for the people of East Timor.
- Repudiation of Apodeti.
- Rejection of integration into Indonesia.
- Recognition of Portugal as the only mouthpiece for the process of decolonisation and adoption of Portuguese as the official language of East Timor;
- To resort to the United Nations to support Portugal in the process of decolonisation.
- Establishment of a transitional government between Fretilin and UDT and the Portuguese Government.
- Portuguese Timor is to be renamed East Timor (Timor Leste in Portuguese) and its citizens referred to as Timorese.71

Possibly as a reaction to the coalition, a military side of Operasi Komodo was initiated in early 1975. There was a major combined armed forces exercise in Sumatra on 18 February in preparation for a landing at Dili, but the poor performance of the participating units, and a subsequent leak by an Australian Defence Department source led to a temporary abandonment of the idea of a military action.72

The background to this was that Australia’s Foreign Affairs and Defence Departments were then on a collision course with regards to East Timor. The Defence Department stated on 9 October 1975 that (abridged):

Apart from Papua New Guinea, Indonesia is the territory which and from non-nuclear attack against Australia could be most readily launched … The conclusion is that we recommend a line of policy that offers reasonable prospects of meeting the basic requirements of all parties, namely acceptance of an independent state in Portuguese Timor … such a course would remove the Indonesian threat of force with its injurious consequences for relations with Australia. It would satisfy the demand for self-determination. It would move the Indonesians from a course of confrontation, which risks pushing their Timorese opponents into the extremism Indonesia fears, to one of co-operation with the dominant political elements in the territory and so allow them good prospects of negotiating some agreement that could satisfy their security requirements. Australia could strongly support this. Ultimately, if the Indonesians were skilful in their political policy, this course would offer them … good prospects of peaceful absorption of the territory or at least unchallengeable dominance there. Meantime, the territory would be heavily

70 Dunn, op. cit., p. 88.
71 Nicol, op. cit., p. 88.
72 On 21 February an article in the Sydney Morning Herald noted: ‘There are mounting indications … that the Indonesian government is seriously considering taking out Portuguese Timor in a military operation in the not too distant future’ (Nicol, op. cit., p. 279).
dependent upon the good will and support of Indonesia and Australia and the two together should be able to provide against any inimical external influence becoming established. An additional advantage would be the injection into the Australian-Indonesian relationship of a substantial field of cooperation. This would be of major benefit to the defence interest.\(^{73}\)

Defence had little say, however, in formulating Australia’s Timor policy. The Foreign Affairs Department were together with Prime Minister Whitlam laying the course for this policy, and a bypassed Defence Department resorted to the leaking of classified information to the press, such as the piece about a planned Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor.\(^{74}\) The reader may notice the similarity to the situation in Indonesia, with people from Intelligence and Foreign Affairs taking precedence over operations branches of the army.

In Canberra some were increasingly worried about Australia’s compliance in Indonesia’s scheme against Portuguese Timor. Doubts had been raised about the close contact with Harry Tjan, but they had never been acted upon. In a submission to Foreign Minister Don Willesee on October 27, 1975, the Foreign Affairs Department’s secretary Graham Feakes said: “By giving this information to us, the Indonesians put the government in a position of conniving with them in their military intervention in the territory.”\(^{75}\)

Instead of a military invasion there was – for the time being - a barrage of propaganda, which reached a crescendo in February 1975. A series of hostile broadcasts from stations in West Timor claimed that a communist plot was being hatched, and that left-leaning MFA officers had been making secret deals with Fretilin and UDT and were planning to hand over the government of the province to the Timorese in the latter part of the year. In the Jakarta press the pro-integration Apodeti party was portrayed as persecuted.\(^{76}\)

**Portuguese Timor in the world-system 1974-75 – a political obstacle and a (potential) economic asset**

It appears that Suharto wanted to avoid unnecessary confrontations with the West over the issue of East Timor. While strong factions within the Indonesian armed forces were, as we have seen, in favour of a quick military operation, Suharto himself acted very cautiously. I would suggest that this Indonesian ambivalence towards East Timor, inherited from the vague formulations in the constitution of 1945, only tipped in favour of annexation due to a lack of interest in an alternative solution from the major actors on the international scene. The Indonesians had already assessed that the minor, but potentially worrisome, actor Portugal was anxious to disengage itself from its colonial role as soon as possible, and that at least some of the leaders there were not averse to the idea of handing East Timor over to Indonesia, after a certain period of decolonization.

Up until mid-1975 Suharto avoided making any comments about the future of the Portuguese colony. However, after a trip to Iran, Yugoslavia, Canada, the United States and Japan, he stated that East Timor could not become independent because it lacked economic viability, a statement which seemed to reflect growing confidence that important countries were backing Indonesia.\(^{77}\) The Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam was, as we have

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\(^{74}\) Nicol, op. cit., p. 283.

\(^{75}\) Garran, op. cit., p. 22.

\(^{76}\) Dunn, op. cit., p. 90.

\(^{77}\) Ibid, p.166.
already seen, sympathetic to the Indonesian stance, and so was the British Ambassador to Indonesia, Sir John Archibald Ford.

Richard Woolcott, the Australian Ambassador to Jakarta, informed Canberra about the British Ambassador’s view in a cable sent 21 July 1975. Woolcott had received a copy of the British report, which said, among other things, that

It is in Britain’s interest that Indonesia should absorb the territory as soon as and as unobtrusively as possible; and that if it comes to the crunch and there is a row in the United Nations we should keep our heads down and avoid siding against the Indonesian Government.

Suharto’s strongest card, however, was undoubtedly the backing of the United States State Department. Richard Woolcott sent a cable to Canberra on 17 August 1975 saying that (abridged):

We are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor, as Malik (Adam Malik, Indonesia’s Foreign Minister at the time, G.J.) admitted to me. The United States might have some influence on Indonesia at present as Indonesia really wants and needs United States assistance in its military re-equipment programme, but Ambassador Newsom told me that he is under instructions from Kissinger not to involve himself in discussions on Timor with the Indonesians on the grounds that the United States is involved in enough problems of greater importance. The State Department has, we understand, instructed the Embassy to cut down its reporting on Timor. Newsom’s present attitude is that the United States should keep out of the Portuguese Timor situation and allow events to take their course. His somewhat cynical comment to me was that if Indonesia were to interfere the United States would hope they would do so effectively, quickly and not use our equipment.

One reason behind this policy was the strategic importance which East Timor held for the Pentagon. The Indonesian Archipelago shields access to the Pacific from the Indian Ocean and within it lie four straits used by American submarine fleets – the Malacca, Sunda, Lombok and Ombai-Wetar straits. According to a 1977 paper by R. G. Boyd of the Canadian Defence Department, the first two are unreliable because they are too shallow, and the Malacca Strait is overcrowded. That makes the Ombai-Wetar and Lombok straits vital to US naval strategy, and Boyd rates them along with the Straits of Gibraltar as the most crucial deep-water straits in US defence planning. The Ombai-Wetar strait runs within the boundaries of East Timor territory, so it is not surprising that the US should become concerned about its security once it became evident by 1975 that the main contender for power within East Timor was Fretilin. Also influential on US policy were Indonesia’s extensive trade and investment contracts with US corporations, and its role as the major opponent to communist expansion in the ASEAN region. Adding to this was an important

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78 A number of leaked cables from Woolcott were published by Walsh and Munster (1980) in the book *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1968-75*. The Australian Government, in response, lodged an injunction preventing distribution of the book. It was eventually published in Hong Kong.


Japanese connection behind the US policy on Indonesia. A strong and friendly Indonesia was seen as crucial in maintaining a firm US-Japanese relationship.

Virtually all of Japan’s oil is shipped from the OPEC nations through the same Indonesian waters as the US submarines are using. Senator Mike Mansfield explained the significance of Indonesia’s straits in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in December 1976: ‘Continued unhindered transit of shipping through these waters is important to US interests and is vital to Japan, for whom these waters are a lifeline to Europe and the Middle East’.\footnote{Scott Sidell, ‘The United States and Genocide in East Timor.’ In \textit{Journal of Contemporary Asia}, Vol. 11, No. 1, Stockholm, 1981, p. 56.} Japan was taking eighty-five per cent of Pertamina’s output, and Timor seemed to threaten regional stability when the source of oil in Indonesia itself was in a crisis.\footnote{In March 1975 Pertamina was close to bankruptcy because investments which had been lucrative for members of the Indonesian military elite but were otherwise complete failures. The growing state apparatus had shown itself to be increasingly prone to mismanagement and corruption. During 1975 the Indonesian Government had to borrow US$1500 million to pay Pertamina’s short-term debts, but when it became clear that this could not save the company, the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia, IGGI, supplied the Indonesian Government with US$ 920 million for 1975-76 (John G. Taylor, \textit{Indonesia’s Forgotten War. The Hidden History of East Timor.} London: Zed Books Ltd., 1991, p. 76.) The Pertamina scandal exposed enormous levels of corruption, but did not to any great extent ward off foreign investors; nor did it alienate their governments (Michael, R. J. Vatikiotis, \textit{Indonesian Politics Under Suharto. Order, development and pressure for change.} London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 37).} In a report to the US Congress in 1975, the US State Department further emphasised Indonesia’s importance to US interests because Indonesia, while being a member of OPEC, did not join the more radical OPEC countries in the 1973 oil embargo.

All the above factors added together clearly indicated that Indonesia’s integrationist policy towards East Timor would not be met with strong disapproval if it was crowned with a quick and efficient military operation. This became increasingly clear when in September and October 1975, leading Operasi Komodo figures Harry Tjan Silalahi and Liem Bian-Kie (later known as Yusuf Wanandi), visited Western Europe and North America to argue for an understanding of Indonesia’s security preoccupations and her special interest in East Timor’s future. At the same time, Ali Murtopo visited Lisbon, among other places, and Suharto met, as described above, Australian Prime Minister Whitlam and also had talks with Malaysia’s Prime Minister Tun Razak in Kuala Lumpur.\footnote{Dunn, \textit{op. cit.}, p.112.}

The Indonesians were thus able to establish that in Western Europe (Portugal aside) and in North America there was little interest in, or concern about, East Timor. All the governments in the non-communist world of importance to Indonesia, namely the Western Europeans, the United States, India, Japan, and the ASEAN states, were at the outset motivated by a desire to sympathise with Jakarta’s security anxieties in the uncertain aftermath of the withdrawal of the Americans from Vietnam. ASEAN governments, apart from Singapore, seems to have accepted the Indonesian picture of an independent East Timor as a potential communist threat to the area.\footnote{1974-75 was a period when the threat of world-communism was not yet a bad joke. Eastern Europe was seemingly irreversibly under the heels of the Soviet Union. The communist parties in Italy and France had large public support. The American defeat in Vietnam caused widespread fear that communism would spread through the rest of Southeast Asia, and in Portugal the new regime moved to the left after September 1974. The independence of Portugal’s former colonies in Africa meant that the Soviet Union gained a firmer political foothold in that continent. To link Fretilin with Mozambique’s Frelimo was an obvious thing to do from an outside perspective, and Frelimo was unambiguously a communist organisation. In Australia, the possibility of an independent East Timor administered by Fretilin was increasingly referred to as ‘another Cuba at our doorsteps’ by right-wing politicians.} As for the Soviet Union, this communist arch-enemy of the Western world enjoyed normal relations with otherwise staunchly anti-communist Jakarta, based on strategic and trade considerations from both sides – and Jakarta welcomed this as a counter-balance.
against China. The diplomatic relations with China had suspended in 1967 in the aftermath of the events in 1965. Beijing was suspected of complicity with the PKI, and was viewed by the new ABRI-dominated government as a threat through its possible support of a resurgent underground PKI, both directly and through a "fifth column" of Chinese Indonesians. The end result was that one super power actively supported Indonesia, while the other turned a blind eye.

However, this mid-1970s fear of a leftist regime in the formerly stable Portuguese Timor was only the final factor which tipped the scales in favour of an Indonesian take-over. The Australian view of the future of the territory – also shared by Great Britain, New Zealand and USA – had already, as mentioned above, been set in 1963, and viewed East Timor’s incorporation into Indonesia as inevitable. Likewise, Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam’s Indonesia-directed foreign policy was envisioned and established long before the Lisbon-coup and the appearance of ‘leftists’ in Dili.

An added factor in favour of Indonesian annexation was that important business circles in Australia were fed up with the ‘shilly-shallying’ of the Portuguese authorities in the handling of oil-prospecting concessions and in the drawn out negotiations for an established sea border with Australia. The question of concessions had been handled in a satisfactory manner in negotiations with the Indonesian state-owned oil-company Pertamina since 1966, and a maritime border had been agreed upon between Australia and Indonesia in 1972, leaving the question of the ‘Timor Gap’ to be resolved (cf. chapter 7).

Obviously, both politicians and the oil-business lobbying groups were in favour of future negotiations with Indonesia rather than with Fretilin. The timing of a de-colonisation period in Portuguese Timor which seemed to have as an inevitable end independence under Fretilin was simply lousy from their perspective. Even nature, in the shape of Cyclone Tracy, seemed to work against the dreams of an independent East Timor.

I choose the words of Barbedo de Magalhães to sum up the above discussion:

Indonesia put forward its plan for the annexation, counting on the support of Australia, the compliance of the western world in general and the USA in particular, the understanding of the USSR and without a strong opposition from Lisbon.

Indonesia had made a totally correct assessment of the situation.

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88 One reason behind Indonesia’s fear of a communist East Timor was the arrival of Timorese students from Portugal from September 1974 onwards. These students had turned to the Maoist variety of Communism after realising that the major, strongly pro-Moscow Communist party (PCP) in Portugal simply had no policy on East Timor, due to the Soviet Union’s lack of interest in the matter. By the end of 1974 Fretilin was criticized in one of the PCP publications for what they called its childish radicalism (Barbedo de Magalhães & Soei Liong Liem, East Timor and Indonesia. Global Context and Local Actors. Oporto: IASI, International Institute for Asian Studies and Interchange, 2007, p. 20). My East Timorese informants on this matter (UDT members in 1974, and therefore highly unlikely to underestimate the number of ‘Maoists’ in Fretilin) gave the number of these as nine and seven respectively. Most of those were killed by the Indonesians, the last one in 1981, while two or three survived on ‘the outside’. Both in East Timor and in exile and, as mentioned above, also among the support groups, this split between radicals and less so caused considerable harm to the struggle for independence. It might indeed be argued that it still causes harm in the struggle for development and democracy. That Indonesia attached so much importance to these few communists may also be a reflection of its own modern history, where the returning PI members had been a dominating force in the struggle against Dutch colonialism (cf. ch. 8.) In 1926, at the peak of its political activities, the PI’s membership was only thirty-eight (John Ingleson, The Road to Exile. The Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927-1934. Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1979, p. 2).
89 Barbedo de Magalhães, East Timor, Land of Hope. 2nd Seminar on East Timor of the Oporto University Oporto: Rectory of the University, 1990, p. 8.
Decolonisation proceeds – tension builds up

On 31 January 1975 a delegation of Portuguese officials from Timor left for Lisbon, stopping on the way at Kupang (the capital of West Timor), Bali, and Jakarta for talks with the Indonesian authorities. In Jakarta they gave formal guarantees that the Portuguese government would not take any stand in relation to Timor without previously consulting Indonesia, and that Apodeti would enjoy the same treatment as the other political parties. In Lisbon the delegation argued the urgency of defining a Portuguese policy for East Timor at a meeting with the National Commission for Decolonisation. The suggestion presented by the delegation from Timor that the issue should be internationalised did not gain support. According to the National Commission for Decolonisation, an appeal to the UN should only be used as a last resort.90

In the meantime, Indonesian paranoia about the situation in Timor was increasing, as slogans such as *Fogo aos traidores* (burn the traitors) were painted on walls around Dili, obviously directed at Apodeti. On 27 February Indonesian newspapers featured a story about leftists in Portuguese Timor conducting a ‘hate-Indonesia campaign’. The slogans had in fact also been thought up by two of the radical students from Lisbon, António Carvarino and Roque Rodrigues, as a response to the information that Apodeti was smuggling weapons into Timor.91

At a secret meeting in London between high-level Indonesian and Portuguese delegations on 9 March 1975, the Portuguese reportedly told the Indonesians that integration had very little support in the colony. The Indonesians suggested that they be involved formally in the decolonisation process as an ‘interested party’. The Portuguese rejected this idea, and proposed instead to set up a consultative council in which the Timorese, Portugal and Indonesia would be represented. The Indonesians pressed the Portuguese to abandon the idea of a transitional government (also a part of the UDT/Fretelin coalition agreement) and to set up a consultative body with Indonesian and Portuguese participation which would advise the Portuguese Governor on the best methods of conditioning the Timorese to accept integration. The Indonesians assured that they would not use military force, and the Portuguese promised that they would place no obstacles in the way of Apodeti’s activities if it agreed to participate in the planned transitional government.92

One day after the London talks there appeared in *The Australian* an article called ‘Garrison in Timor ready for immediate surrender’. The reporter, Bruce Stannard, cited an unnamed senior Portuguese army officer who had the day before conceded that it would take only a small Indonesian commando to take control of Portuguese Timor, with little or no bloodshed. He said Portuguese troops could not, and would not, defend the international airstrip at Baucau, and that the mere appearance of an Indonesian flotilla would be enough to prompt immediate surrender. The officer had said that Timorese troops might offer some resistance in the central highlands, but Indonesia could have full control within a week. Stannard also wrote of an expected Australian delegation being organised in Sydney by a journalist from the Communist Party newspaper *Tribune*. The timing of this expected visit could not be worse for those on the island who were trying to calm Indonesian fears of a communist takeover, as the Indonesians were well aware of the political sympathies of this group.93

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91 Nicol, op. cit., p. 41.
Also on 10 March, Peter Hastings, the man who on 21 February had warned about the possibility of an imminent Indonesian invasion of East Timor, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the threat had subsided and that ‘for the time being it is obvious ... that a military solution is not on’. The threat of an Indonesian invasion had thrown Timor onto the headlines in Australia. When the threat diminished, two delegations arrived in Portuguese Timor from its southern neighbour. First to arrive was a group organised by the earlier mentioned Campaign for Independent East Timor (CIET), the delegation mentioned by Stannard. This ‘people’s delegation’ was led by Jim Roulston, Victorian President of the Metalworkers Union and of the ALP, and included Aboriginal activist Bill Williams, Ken Fry of the ALP, Jill Jolliffe, Australian Union of Students and John Birch of Community Aid Abroad. They were accompanied by Mark Aarons of the ABC-Radio Talks Department. It was organised by Denis Freney, the well known Australian left-wing activist who had visited Timor in September 1974. The group openly supported Fretilin.

Mark Aarons has described how they were met by a huge crowd of about 20,000 people at Dili airport. Some were waving UDT or Fretilin flags, many shouted ‘Viva Independência! Viva Fretilin! Viva UDT. Viva Timor Leste Independente!’ During their ten day stay in East Timor, including extensive travelling around the territory, they were met with similar enthusiasm, albeit on a smaller scale. In Oecusse they witnessed Fretilin’s president Xavier do Amaral, being thrown up high in the air by the crowd, in a treatment befitting a national hero. During their stops they were often approached by villagers who told stories of how relatives had supported the Australian soldiers during their guerrilla fight against the Japanese during WWII. They now counted on Australia to repay its debt to East Timor. Aarons was moved and impressed:

> Signs of profound change were everywhere by March 1975. In every town and even the tiniest village on our route, the local people gathered both to welcome us and demonstrate their clear desire for independence. There was an almost tangible air of hope and expectation. For the first time in modern history the people were starting to take control over their own affairs. New movements had sprung up everywhere. Women’s and student organisations, trade unions and cultural groups, agricultural and health co-operatives, education and literacy programs were all symbols of the fulfilment of their needs and national hopes.

Aarons also states that “of the tens of thousands of ordinary Timorese who demonstrated all along our route, none came forward to support this party favouring integration with Indonesia.” Before this group left Timor, a group of Labour MP’s arrived. The six Australian MP’s were members of the Parliamentary Labour Party’s Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. The delegation consisted of Arthur Gietzelt, Gordon McIntosh, Ken Fry (who took part of both groups), Garth Clayton, John Kerin and Richie Gun. Two events impressed the MP’s very much. The first was the visit by one of them to Oecusse, the Portuguese enclave inside West Timor, where he was given a rousing welcome along with Fretilin President Xavier do Amaral.

The second event was a demonstration by several thousand Fretilin supporters in front of the administration *palácio* in Dili on 18 March 1975, the day after the group arrived. The
MP’s had just finished meeting Apodeti and UDT leaders before moving on to the palacio. They stood on the second-floor balcony watching hundreds of small Fretilin flags waving along with Fretilin banners. The demonstration, the visit to Oecusse and the trip throughout the country convinced the MP’s that Fretilin was the most popular party.\textsuperscript{100} The delegation also met with Indonesian consular representative in Dili, Elias Tomodok, who assured them that his country had no territorial ambitions vis-à-vis Portuguese Timor.

The Australian Ambassador to Lisbon had a few days earlier, in a meeting with Almeida Santos, the Minister for Inter-territorial Co-ordination, expressed his great concern with security in the region because of the UDT/Fretilin coalition which favoured independence for Portuguese Timor. As a reaction to the concern expressed by the Australian Ambassador, Governor Lemos Pires explained to the visiting Australian parliamentarians that he hoped Australia would re-establish a Consulate in Dili. He stressed the need for discussions between an Australian Consul, the Indonesian Consul and himself.\textsuperscript{101} When the MP’s returned from their five-day visit to Timor they recommended that an Australian consulate in Dili be reopened. Both Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and Foreign Affairs rejected the suggestion.\textsuperscript{102} The evidence is compelling that the policies of Canberra and Jakarta in regards to Portuguese Timor were in March 1975 already decided, and that further consultations at consular level in Dili would have been unnecessary. About this time, Elias Tomodok, Indonesia consul in Dili, changed the glass framed pictures of Indonesian progress - modern towns and impressive construction projects – on the outside of the consular building, into more ominous pictures of Indonesian tanks, jet planes and soldiers.\textsuperscript{103} If the carrot doesn’t do the trick, perhaps the whip will?

In the meantime – geological surveys continue

The results of the drillings and seismic surveys during the early 1970s had raised hopes of a deep basin filled with Tertiary sediments (meaning oil) in the offshore areas. In early 1974 Woodside-Burmah signed an agreement with Timor Oil Ltd of Sydney which gave Woodside-Burmah a seventy per cent interest in 1450 square miles, including offshore acreage, under the condition that they carry out seismic surveys and drill at least two wildcats within eighteen months. A similar agreement was reached on the Indonesian side, where Woodside-Burmah obtained a sixty-five per cent interest in an area under concession by International Oil, under the condition of carrying out seismic surveys.\textsuperscript{104} Woodside-Burmah was now clearly becoming the main operator in the Timor area. Matters became both more complicated and more international when Lisbon granted exploration rights over the eastern end of the island, including offshore areas, to Adobe Oil & Gas of Texas. More ominous for the other foreign companies was that the Denver-based Oceanic Oil Company was rewarded exploration rights for the area not delimited by any agreement between Portugal and Australia through its Portuguese subsidiary Petrotimor in December 1974.\textsuperscript{105} These concessions extended to the mid-point of the sea, partially invading areas leased by the Australian government to a consortium comprising of Australian Aquitaine Petroleum Pty Ltd, Esso Australia and Arco Australia Ltd.\textsuperscript{106}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{100} Nicol, op. cit., pp. 271-272.
\bibitem{101} Hill, op. cit., p 129.
\bibitem{102} Nicol, op. cit., 282.
\bibitem{103} Ibid, p. 257.
\bibitem{104} \textit{The Petroleum Economist}, ‘New found Attractions of Timor.’ Vol. XLII, No. 3. London, 1975, pp.103-104.
\bibitem{105} Ibid, p. 105.
\end{thebibliography}
The Australian government protested against the new concessions granted to Oceanic Oil, but Portugal ignored the protests. The dispute stemmed from the fact that Woodside-Burmah’s well Troubadour 1 was flowing gas at over eleven million cubic feet per day in 1974, and that the Puffin 2 well, operated by the consortium mentioned above, was flowing oil at 4272 barrels daily. All this offered encouragement that there were commercial quantities of oil/gas under Portuguese Timor jurisdiction.

This optimism is reflected in three geological reports from 1975. One of these, written by A. A. Crostella and D.E. Powell (both engaged by Woodside-Burmah), was presented at the Fourth Annual Convention of the Indonesian Petroleum Association, Jakarta, in June 1975. The report states that thick intervals rich in both sapropel and cuticle found in the source rock evaluations of the pre-orogenic sequence of East Timor are favourable potential sources for both oil and gas. The report continues, in geological lingo, that ‘the basal interval of the post-orogenic sequence comprises a widespread limestone unit with a locally extremely high porosity, which likewise should prove to be an excellent reservoir. There is also a presence of a wide range of clastics within the Mio-Pliocene succession. This sequence contains both suitable reservoir and seal lithologies, which further enhances the hydrocarbon potential’.

In less geological wording, the authors contend that there is a high probability of oil under the Timor Sea. The second paper, authored by Soeparjadi et al (1975), is from the Ninth World Petroleum Congress, held in Tokyo in 1975. It discusses the oil potential of a wider area, including Indonesia and northern Australia. A generalised prediction by the authors is that offshore reserves will probably provide the majority increase in crude oil production, since major oil and gas reserves have been proved in several of Indonesia’s offshore basins.

Crostella is again co-author of the third paper, ‘Exploration results and future prospects in the northern Australasian region’, in which the Outer Banda Arc and the Irian Jaya foothills belt, ‘regions covered by allochthonous rocks’, are mentioned as commonly rich in oil and gas seepages, with encouraging oil shows in Timor as a result of drilling. The authors write that similar geological provinces are productive elsewhere in the world, for example in Ecuador and in the Italian Apennines. They stress that exploration in this geological setting is difficult and requires careful planning and co-ordination of surface geological, gravity and seismic work. This being done, ‘the reward can be substantial, since the hydrocarbon potential of the allochthonous area is rated highly’.

Early in 1975 Woodside-Burmah drilled one well, the Mola-1, and ran a marine-seismic survey of approximately 450 km, according to the agreement with Timor Oil, and then decided not to exercise the option of drilling one more well. Negotiations between Timor Oil and the Portuguese government were held in early 1975. However, further contract discussions (the concession between Timor Oil and the Portuguese government was to expire on 31 December 1975) were suspended pending a settlement of the political situation.

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110 Ibid.
Oceanic Oil, the sole right-holder in the Timor Gap, started a marine-seismic survey in July 1975, but suspended operations in early August, due to the then increasing political unrest.\(^{114}\)

**In the face of danger – a UDT-Frelon joint communiqué**

As part of the MFA preparations for the planned general election the Decolonisation Commission initiated a programme of elections for liurais, local chiefs. The first in a series of local elections to elect liurais took place in March 1975. The elections were not carried out on a political party basis, but all three recognised political associations took part in the preparations and observed the proceedings.\(^{115}\)

In the village of Chau Luturo, ten km from the town of Lospalos, Australian journalist Michael Richardson observed one such election. The liurai, Fernando Sanches, was being challenged by Filipe Quintas, who was President of the local Frelon committee, although the election was not contested along political party lines. The election was supervised by members of the MFA administration and observed by representatives of Frelon, UDT and Apodeti. Michael Richardson described the election:

> Instead of ballot boxes they use woven baskets made for carrying farm produce. Small stones take the place of voting papers in a region where very few people can read or write. One of the small baskets would have a handkerchief tied to it. This would be Quinta’s basket and those who wanted him as a leader should put their pebbles in there. The other basket without the handkerchief was for Sanches. Each of the small baskets was held aloft and the crowd roared out the right name. All those 18 years of age and above were eligible to vote – 489 of the hamlet’s population. There was much excitement when it was announced that the challenger had deposed the incumbent by 259 pebbles to 92.\(^{116}\)

This process was repeated in thirty-two more districts. Frelon’s prestige increased by the fact that about ninety per cent of the newly elected liurais were Frelon members or supporters.\(^{117}\)

Only one representative out of the many elected was an Apodeti delegate.\(^{118}\) It has to be added here that on trips to the interior, such as that of Richardson, José Ramos Horta of Frelon more often than not acted the local guide and source of information to visiting journalists. He also chose suitable villages (Frelon friendly) or encouraged journalists to visit the eastern part of the island, where the party enjoyed a strong following. Some also actually stayed with Horta while in Dili.\(^{119}\)

As Frelon had campaigned with a land reform as part of their political platform – including the redistribution of surplus land owned by privates as well as by the Catholic church to landless peasants – the results were alarming to the owners of large landholdings, such as the UDT top echelon, and further alienated Frelon in the eyes of the conservative church leadership in Dili.\(^{120}\)

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\(^{115}\) Hill, op. cit., p. 121.

\(^{116}\) Michael Richardson, ‘As grassroots democracy comes to Timor’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 1975, quoted by Hill, op. cit., p. 122.

\(^{117}\) Hill, op. cit., pp.122-123.

\(^{118}\) Horta 1984, op. cit., p.31.

\(^{119}\) Nicol, op. cit., pp. 110-147.

\(^{120}\) This antagonism between a conservative Catholic Church and more radical views echoed developments in South America at the time. The ideas that Frelon based their campaign upon was, as stated above, to a large
On 15 March 1975 the *Melbourne Age* was first to report that a small East Timorese guerrilla was being trained near Atambua, the main town on the Indonesian side of the border. According to the article, Portuguese intelligence officers claimed that about one hundred citizens of Portuguese Timor (i.e. the 216 soldiers under command of Tomás Gonçalves, G.J.) had been trained in the camp, and that they came from Atsabe, the stronghold of the liurai (and APODETI supporter) Guilherme Gonçalves. The Portuguese officials had arrested a lesser chief, Feliciano Gomes, who had been used as a recruiting agent by Gonçalves. Gomes told reporter Michael Richardson that he had been instructed by Guilherme Gonçalves to urge people from the area to go to Indonesia for army training and come back later to fight against parties that opposed a merger with Indonesia. Feliciano Gomes claimed that four Indonesians in civilian dress were present at the meeting with Gonçalves. The arrest of Gomes had become the object of a new wave of propaganda in the Indonesian press, which claimed he had been tortured. He denied this in his discussion with Michael Richardson.

On 18 March 1975 Fretilin and UDT issued a joint communiqué, which said that the two parties were the legitimate representatives of the people of East Timor, that Fretilin and UDT were interpreting the will of the overwhelming majority of the people of East Timor in their quest for independence, and that they rejected any form of domination. The coalition also proposed a detailed programme towards full independence, which included the establishment of a transitional government to be formed by a High Commissioner, representing the President of the Republic of Portugal, and containing equal representation from the Portuguese Government, Fretilin and UDT. The minimum period of this transitional government was to be three years, a period in which reforms of all administrative and political structures would take place. After this period, which could be extended if needed, general elections for a Constitutional Assembly would take place. The joint communiqué emphasised that the transitional government would endeavour to promote friendship, goodwill and cooperation with all countries of the world, but particularly with Australia and Indonesia for the peace and security of the whole region. Even though there was a coalition between UDT and Fretilin, all was not well. The coalition was more or less a ‘shotgun wedding’ entered into in the face of an expected Indonesian invasion.

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degree adopted from Paulo Freire. Such ideas were not, however, restricted to left-wing and – supposedly – secularised politicians. In the 1960’s, a Christian movement in South America interpreted the teachings of Jesus Christ in terms of a struggle against social injustice and solidarity with the poor. In 1971 came a book, *Teología de la liberación* (A Theology of Liberation) written by a Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutierrez, which became one of the movement’s most famous books, and also gave name to the movement. Sharing some common ground with Marxist thought, such as the view that hunger, illiteracy and epidemics were avoidable consequences of unjust conditions in society, and that governments that did not try to eradicate gross disparities between the rich and the poor masses were guilty of “institutionalised violence.” The proponents of liberation theology wished to undermine old hierarchic and hegemonistic power structures – of which of course the Catholic Church itself was a part. Thus, it was only natural that conservatives within the church reacted vehemently against the liberation theologists. Bishop Ribeiros hatred of Fretilin must, I believe, be seen in the larger scope of this struggle within the Catholic Church. While some members of Fretilin were atheists, the great majority weren’t. Xavier do Amaral, for instance, had studied at the priest seminary in Macau, and many Fretilin members – even among “the leftists” - attended mass daily (Dunn, op. cit., p. 51).

The Vatican’s subsequent reluctance to involve itself in the ‘East Timor question’ (with its initial left-leaning connotations) may also to some extent be interpreted with this in mind. The Pope at the time, John Paul II, was squarely on the side of the conservatives on this issue, a stand which he famously demonstrated in Nicaragua in 1983, where he gave his support to a conservative archbishop against revolutionary Sandinistas among the priesthood, and in a confrontation with demonstrators three times shouted “silence” at them. Facing overwhelming opposition, liberation theology gradually dwindled from the mid- 1980s onwards (John Charles Chasteen, *Latinamerikas historia* (The History of Latin-America). Lund: Historiska Media, 2003, pp. 298-301).

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122 Nicol, op. cit., p. 92.
Conflicts between the two parties became increasingly heated in various parts of the territory, and sometimes spilled over into violence, particularly in the towns of Maubisse, Ainaro and Suai. The uneasiness between the two coalition partners was not lessened by Fretilin’s increasingly successful relations with foreign contacts, such as the two Australian delegations. At least to outside observers it seemed as if UDT was placed in the back seat while Fretilin was setting the course of politics within the coalition.

One outcome of the London meeting between Indonesian and Portuguese delegations on 9 March was the arrival in Dili about a month later of an Indonesian delegation. The delegation told Fretilin leaders that Indonesia had no ambitions in East Timor and, in principle, supported independence, but with the UDT the Indonesians talked about the presence of a communist threat. After the Indonesian visit the propaganda broadcasts from West Timor stopped and delegations from the UDT and Fretilin were invited to Indonesia. The Chairman of UDT, Francisco Lopes da Cruz, and the vice-Chairman, César Mousinho, visited Jakarta first. The Indonesian officials suggested to them that UDT form a united front with Apodeti against communist subversion. The two leaders travelled to Australia from Jakarta, and while in Australia they officially downplayed the importance of the coalition and discussed the possibility of establishing an understanding with Apodeti.

This was on a formal level. On an informal level the East Timorese met, according to Freney (1975) and Walsh (1981), Bernard Callinan, commander of the legendary 2/2 Independent Company on Timor during W.W.II at the office of Timor Oil in Melbourne. Freney and Walsh believe (as do many East Timorese and ‘East Timor experts’) that Callinan advised the UDT leaders to break their alliance with Fretilin and form an ‘anti-Communist alliance’ with Apodeti. Callinan has been the only ex-commando who was in Timor in World War II to publicly support East Timor’s integration with Indonesia. He was not only a legendary soldier, but also one of the few Catholics who has been successful within the predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant establishment in Australia, being owner and director of a prosperous engineering consultancy firm in Melbourne and Director of British Petroleum (Australia). He had also served as adviser to South Vietnamese President (and US puppet) Diem in the late 1950s/early 1960s. B.A. Santamaria, another leading Catholic and right-wing politician in Australia – and close friend of Callinan - is mentioned by the same sources as having influenced the two UDT-leaders in their decision to break with Fretilin. Similar advice was also given by the JIO when the UDT leaders visited Canberra.

There may also have been pressure from the Indonesian side. According to leading UDT-member João Carrascalão, Lopes da Cruz was approached by the Indonesian embassy during da Cruz’ and Mousinho’s trip to Australia in May 1975. Mousinho went back to Timor alone,

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124 This did not refrain Indonesia from making an aborted attempt to smuggle weaponry to Apodeti on 8 April 1974. Two fishing vessels signalled with torches to Apodeti members on the shore, but as they realized they were followed and watched by Fretilin personnel they did not dare to signal back, and the whole thing came to nothing (Nicol, op. cit. p. 67).
125 Hill, op. cit., p. 151.
126 Dunn, op. cit., p. 94.
129 Lopes da Cruz later career included being vice-chairman of the ‘Provisional Government of East Timor’, Governor of the Indonesian Province of Timor Timur, and as roving ambassador for Indonesia in matters dealing with the ‘East Timor question’.
130 Freney, 1975, op. cit.
while Lopes da Cruz travelled to Jakarta and then to Kupang, in West Timor. Carrascalão claims that da Cruz travelled back to Portuguese Timor on an Indonesian navy patrol boat which carried two boxes of weapons as well as two of the leading operators of Operasi Komodo, Dading Kabualdi and Alex Dinur, disguised as sailors. Pinto Soares, a leading member of Apodeti, was in charge of customs and cleared the cargo which was sent to Guilherme Gonçalves, the liurai of Atsabe. Carrascalão states that Dading Kabualdi disembarked and travelled all over East Timor, in preparation for the later invasion, with Apodeti member Morato Nhew.132 It goes without saying that Fretilin disagrees with this version. The end result of the coup was a disaster for all Timorese, and this version of events can be interpreted as a way to share the blame with Fretilin, in the sense that a Fretilin coup would have been just as disastrous.

José Ramos Horta and Alarico Fernandes of Fretilin visited Jakarta after the UDT delegation, while the latter were in Melbourne/Indonesia. They found the visit confusing, as Ali Murtopo did not seem to want to discuss Timorese politics with them. They stayed in plush hotels in Jakarta and Bali and whenever they tried to buy anything Indonesian officials paid for it. They were interviewed by a journalist for Tempo magazine who entitled his article ‘Are You a Communist?’ It seemed to them that they had been invited because the Indonesians wanted to find out whether they were communists or not.133

A meeting on higher level was held between President Suharto and Prime Minister Whitlam in Townsville, Queensland, on April 4. The Australian Prime Minister again stated his position that Portuguese Timor should become a part of Indonesia, but only after an acceptable act of self-determination. Suharto, on his part, promised that Indonesia would not use force to achieve this.134

On 2 May 1975 the MFA administration in Dili announced that it would be holding talks with Apodeti and the Fretilin/UDT coalition centered around two proposals; (1) the immediate acceptance of and recognition by the Portuguese Government of the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to independence, and (2) the establishment of, in October 1975, a transitional government and a consultative assembly. The assembly would discuss laws on political parties, an electoral law regulating the election of a constituent assembly, and the distribution of portfolios to be held by the political organisations, with the exception of those reserved for the Portuguese Government.

The first round of talks was scheduled for 7 May with the coalition and for 9 May with Apodeti. The talks between the UDT/Fretilin coalition and the Portuguese authorities were held as planned, presided over by Governor Lemos Pires. It was then agreed that elections for a National Constituent Assembly were to be held in November 1976 and that a proclamation of independence for East Timor was to be made on the Constituent Assembly’s first meeting.135 Apodeti boycotted the planned talks on 9 May.

A break between UDT and Fretilin

It seems to the present author that May 1975 was a turning point in politics in East Timor. A time for the proclamation of independence was agreed upon, and Apodeti’s position was made absolutely clear when the party chose not to attend the talks with the Portuguese administration.

134 Aarons & Domm, op. cit., p. 18. See also Dunn, op. cit., p. 151.
They did not want to discuss the option of independence with the Portuguese, and the Indonesian side had already rejected Apodeti’s first idea of autonomy or independence within Indonesia. The only solution left was to accept integration with Indonesia on Indonesia’s terms. At the same time UDT turned to the right after Lopes da Cruz’ and Mousinho’s visits to Australia and Indonesia. Fretilin, on the other hand, gradually turned to the left after a trickle of very active communists began to arrive from Lisbon.136

The rift between Fretilin and UDT was apparent after the celebration on 20 May 1975 of the first anniversary of Fretilin. Thousands of Timorese came down from the mountains and marched in the streets. They shouted ‘viva Fretilin’, but also ‘viva PAIGC’, ‘viva Frelimo’ and ‘viva MPLA’ (the independence movements in Portuguese Africa). The UDT leaders could see that their influence had diminished since September 1974 when thousands of villagers had welcomed Almeida Santos with Portuguese flags under the banner of UDT, and they worried about the seven Maoists whom they believed could be used by the Indonesians as an excuse for an invasion.137 Not only UDT worried about this; a young Xanana Gusmão, sceptical about the new politics (i.e. the radicals from Portugal) did not make an allegiance to any political party until 20 May 1975 when he finally joined Fretilin.138

Apodeti’s participation in the transitional process was another cause of disagreement (with Fretilin against and UDT for), as was a proposal by Fretilin leaders to leave Dili and concentrate their political work in the rural areas, a proposal which had been put forward by two of the most fervent communists of the nine that had returned from Lisbon, António Carvarino and Roque Rodrigues. The proposal was that the party should undertake an anti-illiteracy and ‘political education’ campaign, using teachers and students from local high schools. In addition to this, they were expected to teach people about elementary hygiene and to initiate production co-operatives and the diversification of crops. The campaign began when small groups of students travelled to villages near Dili, but Carvarino and Rodrigues successfully lobbied for a continuation on a much larger scale.

Since 1974 Timorese students in Lisbon who had some familiarity with the ideas of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, had been working on materials which could be used in the campaign. In this, they did not use Portuguese but Tetun. This was based on the findings of educational research that students are better prepared to learn other languages if they have first learned to read and write in their mother tongue. The Fretilin reading book, *Rai Timur Rai Ita Niang* (Timor Is Our Country), also served as an introduction to Timorese nationalist ideas. The first few pages inform the reader that "Timor is our land. A long time ago Colonialism came to our land because our ancestors were fighting each other. All Timorese will unite together to govern their own land". The problem they faced in the interior of the island was that the people there did not think of themselves as Timorese, but rather as belonging to a particular linguistic group and that they treated people from other linguistic groups as foreigners.140

Another problem was that the new ideas clashed with local traditions. Each stage of ladang, slash and burn cultivation, had to be accompanied by certain rituals. Refraining to do this meant upsetting the ancestors and causing imbalance, leading to failed crops, or worse. Many liurais also resented the newcomers, feeling that they, if successful, would undermine their authority.141

136 Dunn, op. cit., p. 95.
140 Ibid.
141 Nicol, op. cit., p. 151.
UDT criticised the scheme on the grounds that Dili needed educated people to achieve and sustain self-government, and the campaign rhetoric (the groups conducting the campaigns were called ‘Revolutionary Brigades’) reinforced the belief that Fretilin was taking a dangerous turn to the left. UDT blamed Carvarino and Rodrigues for spreading ideas which disrupted local politics, and in mid-May a paper began to circulate calling for the ‘Communist-Maoist extremists’ to be expelled to Portugal.142 The outcome of the conflict was a break between the two parties, on 27 May 1975. Shortly after the return of Lopes da Cruz and Mousinho from Australia and Indonesia, UDT announced its withdrawal from the coalition and accused Fretilin of jeopardising the independence of Timor because of their leftist politics.143 The rupture of the coalition upset the moderates of both parties. José Ramos Horta, one of these moderates, has described it as a fatal wound for the independence movement.144

On 1 June 1975, Apodeti held a ceremony at the Indonesian Consulate in Dili to celebrate the party’s first anniversary during which a “proclamation – 27th Province of the Republic of Indonesia” was presented that “formally proclaimed the colony of Timor as the 27th province of the Republic of Indonesia”. The Proclamation was signed by the Apodeti party’s presidium – that included 1959 rebel veteran, Abel da Costa Belo; and the Party’s central presidium.145

On 10 June 1975 Fretilin formally announced the launching of the controversial Revolutionary Brigades. It is not clear how many of these brigades (each consisting of 10-60 people) that were in operation, but most Fretilin Central Committee members gave up their jobs and became involved in this work, or in other political activities.146

Other groups started by Fretilin in 1975, that would be described as NGO’s today, were the National Union of Timorese Students, Unetim147, and OPJT (Organização Popular da Juventude Timorense, Popular Organization of Timorese Youth), the latter intended to appeal to a wider section of youth than just students.148

Parallel to the outburst of political activities in Dili, an interesting but seldom-related “shadow process” took place near the town of Quelicai, where since the end of W.W.II the population on a number of occasions had petitioned to the Portuguese to reinstate their former kingdom, Letemumo, under the liurai Dom Cosme and, after Dom Cosme’s death, under his son Magali. After the Lisbon coup in April 1974, the administration in Dili agreed to let the people decide on this matter. On July 15, 1974, almost every household head in the area walked to the administration post at Quelicai to sign a document which declared the autonomy of Letemumo. Some days later the Portuguese authorities declared Letemumo to be “the first democratic sucu in East Timor”. However, as Helen Hill points out, loyalty of the signatories was to their liurai and to Letemumo, not to East Timor.149 Note also that the voters were all male, universal suffrage was not yet on the agenda.

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142 Ibid, pp. 299-300.
144 Horta, op. cit., p. 37.
146 Hill, op. cit., p. 159.
147 As three main political parties emerged in 1974-75 - UDT, Fretilin, and Apodeti – the students too split into different groups. Most of the young people were part of Fretilin’s student organization, Unetim, which stands for União Nacional de Estudantes Timorense, the Timorese Students National Union. Unetim was soon replaced by the Organização Popular da Juventude do Timor, Popular Organization of Timorese Youth (OPJT), a Fretilin youth organization of both students and non-students (Constâncio Pinto, 'The Student Movement and the Independence Struggle in East Timor: An Interview’. In Richard Tanter, Mark Selden and Stephen R. Shalom (eds) Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers. East Timor, Indonesia, and the World Community. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield. 2001, pp. 31-32).
148 Hill, op. cit., p. 137.
149 Ibid, pp. 68-69.
Women begin to organise.

A totally foreign aspect of politics, not only to traditional Timorese society, but to all levels and all ethnicities in Timor, including the Portuguese elite, was to include women in political/social activities. In this world, women had subservient roles, being for the most part restricted to childbearing, home care, and to tend the gardens.150

With the exception of some schoolteachers active on the Fretilin Committee for Education and Culture, women had not played a significant role in the leadership of Fretilin, although they seemed to be as numerous as men in the crowds at pro-Fretilin rallies. This traditional role of women was questioned by many, notably by Rosa Muki Bonaparte, a student who arrived from Portugal in early 1975. Her new ideas and enthusiasm meant she quickly became involved in the leadership structure of Fretilin. She became a member of the Central Committee, and was instrumental in the setting up of OPMT (Organização Popular da Mulher Timorense, Popular Organisation of Timorese Women). OPMT was mentioned in the Fretilin political statuses published on 5 January 1975, but it was not actually brought into operation until the end of August. OPMT organised “women clubs” for practical – weaving, sewing of clothes – as well as ideological reasons, “to organize the more active and conscious women and to awaken those who are passive and submissive under the exploitation under which they suffer”.151 Fretilin put a great deal of reliance on OPMT to mobilize women in support of policies which challenged age-old traditions, such as arranged marriages, barlaque, which Rosa Muki Bonaparte saw as transforming women into objects for sale.152

The Macau cimeira

At the end of May 1975 the Portuguese Government announced that representatives of the three Timorese political associations, together with representatives of the MFA, would be invited to a cimeira (summit conference) in Macau. Indonesian diplomatic personnel were to be present as observers.

151 Hill, op. cit., p. 192.
152 Ibid, p. 50.
Fretilin decided not to attend if Apodeti was invited. This decision might have been different had not several of Fretilin’s top leaders been outside the country at the time. José Ramos Horta was in Australia, and Fretilin’s President and Vice-President, Xavier do Amaral and Nicolau Lobato, were in Africa for the independence celebrations of Mozambique. Mari Alkatiri, Fretilin’s political commissioner, also attended the celebrations in Mozambique, and then toured Africa, managing to gather pledges of “certain recognition” from 26 states if Fretilin declared independence from Portugal. Fretilin’s refusal to attend the Macau cimeira, resulted in a severe dilemma for the Portuguese authorities. If the government persisted in demanding Apodeti be present at Macau, Fretilin would not feel obliged to be present and would instead concentrate on the campaign to win the masses within the territory. If Portugal excluded Apodeti from the Macau talks, conditions would be created for the moderate wing of Fretilin to press the party to be present at Macau. But then UDT might announce that the Portuguese Governor had given way to the ‘communists’, while Indonesia would intensify preparations for military intervention. The final decision was that Apodeti would be invited. It was believed that the presence of Apodeti at Macau, and continuing bilateral talks between Portugal and Indonesia, scheduled to take place in Hong Kong, would prevent Indonesian military intervention. The Commission of Decolonisation was of the opinion that Portugal should continue to fight for taking into consideration the will of the people, and that this should be defined in a Constitutional Law on Timor. A proposed version of this law, drafted by Almeida Santos following suggestions from the Commission of Decolonisation of Timor, the political parties in the territory, and the National Decolonisation Commission, was brought to Macau by the Portuguese delegation.

The Macau talks took place between 26-28 June 1975, with representation from UDT, Apodeti, Portugal, and an Indonesian delegation. Most members of the Indonesian delegation were operatives of Operasi Komodo, and were in contact with Apodeti and Lopes da Cruz of UDT throughout the conference. There was great debate over the word ‘independence’ at the cimeira. Apodeti opposed even the use of the word, and were also against the plan to set up a transitional government. The word ‘independence’ occurred only once in the final text, which made UDT accuse the Portuguese of having given in to Apodeti. UDT also criticised the Portuguese for not allowing a longer period for decolonisation than the proposed three years.

Soon after the conference the Portuguese Council of the Revolution approved the Constitutional Law, which provided for another three years of Portuguese sovereignty in Timor and the setting up of a High Commissioner’s Council. This was to consist of a High Commissioner and five ‘joint secretaries’, two of them Portuguese nominees and the other three from, respectively, UDT, Fretilin and Apodeti. A Consultative Government Council in Timor with two representatives from each of the regional councils was to be formed, and the three political parties would also nominate four members to the Government Council. Elections were to be held for a Popular Assembly in October 1976. Following this, Portuguese Timor was to be independent after another two years of preparations. Fretilin reacted by demanding that the Portuguese government immediately declare its intention to grant full independence, and refused to appoint delegates to the proposed council. Fretilin also chose to intensify its political activities in the rural areas in preparation for the 1976 elections.

153 Ibid, pp. 163-164.
155 Barreto, op. cit., p. 38.
157 Dunn, op. cit., p. 96.
158 Ibid, p. 98.
The independence of Mozambique came two days before the Macau cimeira, and it convinced them that this strategy was preferable to making deals with Portugal and Indonesia. Samora Machel’s saying ‘you don’t ask a slave if he wants to be free’ was quoted as a justification for not having participated in the cimeira.159 Not all leaders of Fretilin shared this view. José Ramos Horta, for one, writes that Fretilin’s refusal to attend the Macau talks was a serious political mistake.160

A split within the UDT leadership

The new Constitutional Law caused Indonesia great concern, even if the proposed date for independence had been postponed from November 1976 (which had been agreed during the talks between the Portuguese and the UDT/Fretilin coalition on 7 May) to sometime in 1978. The Indonesians had by now realised that Apodeti’s support was so small that it would have no chance in the planned elections. Their solution to this problem was to create divisions within the UDT leadership. Their key to success was to be UDT President Lopes da Cruz. Francisco Xavier Lopes da Cruz declared in Jakarta early in June that UDT would agree to the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia if this was the wish of the people of the territory. He also said that there was possibility of co-operation between UDT and Apodeti, and that developments in that direction were already in progress.161 During a later visit to Jakarta, in late July 1975, the UDT leaders Lopes da Cruz, João Carrascalão and Domingos de Oliveira were warned that Indonesia would not tolerate a Fretilin government in East Timor.162

Lopes da Cruz had already been on an Indonesian-sponsored trip in Asia earlier in the same month. In view of the statements in June and other incriminating circumstances, Carrascalão and de Oliveira became increasingly worried about da Cruz’s links with the Indonesians. While stopping in Bali on their way back from Jakarta, Carrascalão claims that the three were approached by a man who presented himself as Malaysia’s Minister of Defence. Just as the Indonesians had done in Jakarta, he gave them a warning against a left-wing government in East Timor.

They stopped again in Kupang, West Timor. According to Carrascalão, El Tari, the Governor of West Timor, woke him up in the middle of the night at the hotel where he was staying and told him about Indonesian invasion plans; that Indonesia was already gathering troops on the border between West and East Timor and on the neighbouring island of Alor. It was then that Carrascalão decided to attempt a coup in Portuguese Timor in order to get rid of the communists. The UDT leaders’ arrival in Dili coincided with the return of Xavier do Amaral from Mozambique. Carrascalão claims that UDT got hold of an Amaral-penned detailed plan for a Fretilin coup in late July. In Carrascalão’s words, this meant that UDT now were in a hurry to carry through their coup in order to pre-empt the Fretilin coup!163

159 Hill, op. cit., p. 166.
162 Horta 1984, op. cit.
163 João Carrascalão, interviewed by the author, Sydney, April 1994. It goes without saying that Fretilin disagrees with this version.
Decolonisation – the end of the game

UDT staged a military coup in Portuguese Timor on 11 August 1975. Salustiano Freitas took part in the coup. He says that the UDT coup was not staged to take power from the Portuguese, but to get the Portuguese to kick out ‘the seven bad wolves’, the Maoists who had arrived from Portugal and steered Fretilin towards more leftist politics.\(^{164}\) João Carrascalão, the leader of the coup, invited the police chief Maggiolo Gouveia to UDT headquarters, where he was ‘arrested’. (It is disputable whether Gouveia unwillingly took part in the event as he later openly supported UDT). A UDT representative then went to police headquarters and told the policemen that their commander would be killed if they did not support the coup. UDT gained in this way access to arms as well as police support.

Then, in the early morning of 11 August, UDT took charge of strategic points in Dili.\(^{165}\) The Governor, when informed of these events, convened the Decolonisation Commission, which agreed on three principles in reaction to what was happening – to avoid bloodshed at any cost, to try to get UDT and Fretilin to talk, and not to support the position of UDT in trying to expel certain Fretilin leaders or the two MFA officers Mota and Jonatas. This was conveyed to João Carrascalão, after which the Decolonisation Commission contacted Fretilin’s Rogério Lobato, the one remaining Fretilin leader in Dili.

The following day Lobato presented a list of fifteen conditions, set up by Fretilin as preliminaries for negotiation. They included that UDT would be disarmed, that Timorese soldiers from the Dili garrison resume control of the city, that communications with the outside world be re-opened, with access for all parties, that safe conduct be guaranteed for all Fretilin negotiators, and that negotiations be conducted only through the Governor, acting as the representative of Portugal.

The same day, 12 August, a small cargo ship, the SS Macdili, left for Darwin, Australia, with about one hundred wives and children of Portuguese officials, some wealthy Chinese, a few Australian aid workers and some tourists.\(^{166}\) Three days after the UDT coup a small Portuguese delegation was sent from Lisbon with the purpose of making peace between UDT and Fretilin. Further travel was obstructed by the Indonesian authorities when the delegation landed in Denpasar, Bali. The delegation was not permitted to fly on to Kupang in West Timor, where a Portuguese government aircraft was waiting, and the delegation had to fly back to Lisbon the same day.\(^{167}\) This may have been the perhaps most successful single manoeuvre of Operasi Komodo, as the arrival in Dili of this delegation would most likely have led to an agreement between UDT and Fretilin.\(^{168}\) Bishop Ribeiro, who might otherwise have had a difference, refused to mediate between the two parties.\(^{169}\)

There had been a little shooting during the night of the coup, resulting in a few deaths, but UDT troops now patrolled the streets and although the situation in Dili was not very violent,

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\(^{164}\) Interview with Salustiano Freitas in Melbourne 4 April 1992. The seven were Antonio Carvarino, Vicente Manuel Reis, Abílio Araújo, Guilhermina Araújo, Roque Rodrigues, Rosa Muki Bonaparte and Venancio Gomes da Silva.

\(^{165}\) Shortly after the seizure of Dili police station Carrascalão placed Lopes da Cruz under house arrest. However, the Indonesians somehow managed to sneak da Cruz out of Dili on an aeroplane which arrived in Dili under the disguise of delivering supplies to the consulate. Da Cruz was flown to Batugadê, on the West Timor side of the border, where he was met by Dading Kabuadi and Sugiyanto, one of Ali Murtopo’s closest aides (interview with João Carrascalão, Sydney, April 1994).


\(^{167}\) Dunn, op. cit., p. 174.

\(^{168}\) Patricia Thatcher, personal communication, March 1997.

tension had begun to increase. On 13 August the Los Palos military garrison (in the eastern end of the territory) declared itself pro-UDT and the Dili police chief declared himself to openly support UDT. By 15 August around eighty Fretilin members had been arrested in Dili. On the seventeenth the Portuguese sent Majors Jonatas and Mota out of Timor and on the night of 18 August UDT forces attacked Fretilin’s headquarters. The Fretilin people inside were arrested, and several of those that were jailed were shot.170

Rogério Lobato spent his time lobbying for the support of the second line army units, manned by East Timorese soldiers, though the Portuguese believed he was trying to bring about negotiations. On 14 August he returned to Dili and on 17 August the Portuguese took him by helicopter to Maubisse with the mission of bringing Fretilin’s President Xavier do Amaral back to Dili. Lobato made a twenty-hour walk from Maubisse to Aileu, where he gained the support from the military garrison. By the nineteenth he was back in Dili and in command of the garrison there, the soldiers having made the decision to support Fretilin.171 A brief civil war between UDT and Fretilin began on 19 August. Two neutral zones were immediately proclaimed. One was the Governor’s residence at a waterfront suburb of Dili, the second was the harbour administration buildings and wharf. The Portuguese, Mestizo and Timorese employees of the Portuguese colonial administration took refuge with their families in these two zones; a small number of Chinese did the same. These areas were guarded by Portuguese paratroopers. On 20 August, Fretilin created Falintil, Forças Armadas de Libertação do Timor-Leste, National Liberation Forces of East Timor, as their formal armed wing.172

Until 27 August a fierce and bloody battle raged throughout the western part of Portuguese Timor. However, Thatcher and Guterres write that at no stage was there fighting east or south of Manatuto, an area which constitutes at least half of East Timor.173 There were instances of atrocities, including the murder of eleven members of one of Fretilin’s Revolutionary Brigades who engaged in literacy work near Alas. One of those murdered was Domingos Lobato, brother of Nicoalu and Rogerio. In many instances, the abstract but still violent rhetoric of modern politics re-ignited old grievances and was used as a pretext to settle these old accounts among rival families and tribes.174 In general Apodeti did not take part in the fighting. Its members took refuge in the Indonesian consulate building and remained there throughout most of the civil war.175 The Indonesian consulate staff themselves were evacuated on 26 August by an Indonesian ship under cover from Indonesian paratroopers.176 The Apodeti “partisans” under Tomás Gonçalves, however, had begun to cross the border from West Timor since the beginning of the civil war, where they forced a number of young men to join them, underlining their seriousness with a number of killings.177 When the SS Macdili returned from Darwin fighting was intense, and the ship had to anchor offshore. On the night of 27 August some 700 people boarded cattle barges which took them to the small steamer, which took the refugees to Darwin.

172 Ryan, op. cit., p. 17.
173 Thatcher and Guterres, op. cit., p. 12.
175 Dozens of Chinese informants now living in Melbourne have told Patricia Thatcher that the Apodeti members at the Indonesian consulate occasionally took advantage of the situation by venturing out to loot Chinese stores (Personal communication from Patricia Thatcher, March 1997).
176 Hill, op. cit., p. 172.
177 CAVR, op. cit., p. 19.
In between the two trips made by the SS Macdili, a Norwegian cargo ship, the SS Lloyd Bakke, answered an S.O.S. from the governor, and took approximately one thousand civilians to Darwin. Bishop Ribeiro personally escorted a group of nuns to the harbour to be evacuated. Such was his authority that the warring sides stopped shooting as the Bishop passed with his protégées. Once the Bishop was out of sight, the fighting continued. Also on 27 August 1975, Governor Lemos Pires and about one hundred of the Portuguese members of the Administration left Dili by boat for the small neighbouring island of Ataúro, also a part of the Portuguese colonial territory. As they did so, an Indonesian naval vessel evacuated the Indonesian consulate.

Portugal made one last attempt to thwart disaster, when Almeida Santos, en route to Australia, landed in Jakarta and held talks with acting Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja. The Indonesian Minister asked that Portugal authorise the entry of Indonesian troops into Portuguese Timor, a proposal which Santos flatly rejected. In Australia, Almeida Santos presented the idea that Australia be part of a regional peacekeeping force, under a joint authority of Portugal, Indonesia and Australia. This idea was as flatly rejected by Canberra – to the Portuguese ambassador to Australia - as the Indonesian proposal had been by Almeida Santos. Santos was by then on his way to Darwin and Ataúro. Portugal was for all practical reasons isolated by both Indonesia and Australia, and the chances for a peaceful settlement in Timor was now more or less forfeited.

By this point, Fretilin had shown itself to be the strongest of the warring parts. When Fretilin gained the upper hand it was time for revenge. The UDT leaders were blamed for the killings in the countryside and those who were captured by Fretilin were severely beaten. Loss of life for the whole of the civil war period was estimated at between 1,500, (the Red Cross) and 2,300, estimated by (ACFOA, Australian Council for Overseas Aid).

UDT was driven out of Dili and slowly retreated towards the border of West Timor. Sporadic fighting continued between Fretilin and UDT forces at Liquica, Maubara, Atabae and Balibó. At the same time, broadcasts from Kupang spread misinformation and exaggerated the fighting, which led many of the people living close to the border to flee into West Timor. Indonesia attempted to exploit the refugee situation by a gross exaggeration of the numbers of East Timorese fleeing into West Timor. It claimed that over 45,000 people had escaped the Fretilin terror and now taxed the already meagre resources of West Timor. This

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179 Kohen, op. cit., p. 84.
183 Thatcher and Guterres, op. cit., p. 12.
was refuted by Father Fernandes, a Timorese priest who served on the refugee committee set up by the Indonesians. Fernandes claimed that the number was never higher than 20,000. Also, some of them had been there since March 1975, when Guilherme Gonçalves began his recruiting campaign for soldiers to be trained in Indonesia. The refugees were housed in about a dozen camps in the Atambua-Atapupo area, where they were overlooked by guards from the Indonesian army. Soon, relief aid from a number of countries arrived at Kupang, the capital of West Timor but, according to the refugees, only parts of it reached their intended recipients, the rest ending up with local officials and Indonesian military.184

At about this time, the Bishop of Dili, along with the Bishops of Kupang and Atambua in Indonesian Timor, made an announcement, published in the Jakarta newspaper Tempo on 6 December, in which they conveyed their support for Apodeti, and to the idea of integration of East Timor with Indonesia.185

In Batugadé, a town close to the border with West Timor, the fleeing UDT forces were met by, and teamed up with, Lopes da Cruz, who had apparently set aside old grudges. Running out of supplies, the UDT leaders appealed to Indonesia for food, ammunition and access to Indonesian Timor. Two Indonesian officials, Sugiyanto and Louis Taolin,186 came to Batugadé and told them they would assist them if they addressed a petition appealing for integration with Indonesia. The petition was signed on 7 September.187

There is a letter, addressed to El Tari, the Governor of West Timor, in which Lopes da Cruz and João Carrascalão, the recently jailed and his jailer, request El Tari to pass on to Almeida Santos, Portugal’s Minister for Inter-Territorial co-ordination, ‘the following consideration of our own’:

1. At this moment we are leading [our] own people in their difficulties and support [them] against the communist terror of FRETILIN force and also helping it to be evacuated out of the intimidation supported by Portuguese officials inside East Timor.

2. In a deep feeling of true collaboration we would like to suggest Mr. Almeida Santos that we are ready to receive his visit in Batugadé to discuss the East Timor problem under the only condition of terms of integration into the Republic of Indonesia in accordance with the position already made to his Excellency the President of Indonesia.

Batugadé, September 12 1975.

On behalf of Movimento Anti-Communista.
Francisco Xavier Lopes da Cruz          João Carrascalão
President                           Commander-in-Chief

The ‘terms of integration in accordance with the position already made to his Excellency the President of Indonesia’ alludes to the answer from President Suharto to the petition of integration signed on 7 September, according to which Indonesia accepted the wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor who wanted integration with Indonesia if this was ‘the genuine wishes of the people in Portuguese Timor’, and the result of ‘the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of East-Timor’.188 On the same day as this letter to El

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184 Dunn, op. cit., pp. 182-183.
186 Louis Taolin was a member of the staff of West Timor’s governor, El Tari. Taolin had during Operasi Komodo worked as an Indonesian secret agent in Portuguese Timor, under the cover of a business operation (Nicol, op. cit., p. 225).
187 Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 150.
Tari/Almeida Santos was signed, Guilherme Gonçalves, the most important Apodeti leader, was airlifted across the border by the Indonesians.\textsuperscript{189} There is a later document, called ‘31 points’, in which UDT set up this number of conditions for accepting integration with Indonesia, but I have not been able to obtain a copy of it.\textsuperscript{190} In any case, the fleeing UDT forces were in no position to impose conditions on Indonesia. Indonesia could afford to wait, and then give the refugees an offer they could not refuse. On 24 September the UDT forces, together with the leadership of the two minuscule parties Trabalhista and Kota and twenty-three Portuguese soldiers taken prisoner by UDT, entered West Timor. The whole party numbered ca 900 people.\textsuperscript{191} The fleeing UDT forces and followers thereby joined the several thousand refugees already in West Timor, some of which had been there since March 1975, when Guilherme Gonçalves began his recruiting campaign for soldiers to be trained in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{192} They were disarmed and placed in the already existing camps, where they were provided with only little food, and had to work long hours in the fields or at road constructions under surveillance by armed guards. Many sold or exchanged personal belongings such as watches or rings to the guards in exchange for extra rations of food. Only a few, and carefully guided, foreigners were allowed to visit the camps, and only those among the UDT leaders who were firmly on the side of integration with Indonesia were allowed to talk to journalists (Dunn 1984:183-184). Some of the UDT troops who carried arms were absorbed into Tomás Gonçalves’ partisan group, further increasing its’ striking power against the border towns on the eastern side of the border.\textsuperscript{193} One of those towns is Bobonaro, home town of João Tavares, who added still one more armed group, called Halilintar, to the Indonesia-led East Timorese force. The operation wherein support groups of East Timorese militias were used in an attempt to cover the true role of the Indonesian army, was called Operasi Flamboyan (Operation Poinciana Tree). Building upon experiences gained from the crushing of local uprisings in Indonesia, and the large-scale massacres of real or imagined communists in 1965 (cf. chapter 9), ABRI here, via it’s special operations unit RPKAD (later renamed Kopassandha/Kopassus), for the first time transplanted an already established policy of terror to the soil of East Timor; a policy were groups of young men were used as efficient tools as intimidators and killers of their own kin.

For all practical reasons, the period of decolonisation was now a thing of the past. The UDT leadership had fled to West Timor and the Portuguese administration had left the main island for Ataúro, where it remained a passive observer of events. Fretilin suddenly found themselves masters of the territory, complete with the responsibilities that go with the running of a country.

Fretilin appointed on 28 August three commissioners to plan an economic reconstruction.\textsuperscript{194} The earlier mentioned Organização Popular da Mulher do Timor, the Popular Organisation of Timorese Women (OPMT) was also formally established on that day and given a task to be shared with Organização Popular da Juventude do Timor, the Popular Organisation of Timorese Youth (OPJT), namely that of establishing crèches to care for war orphans and to feed the displaced. These crèches, at Turiscai, Maubisse, Baucau and in Dili, were functioning after only a couple of weeks.\textsuperscript{195}

After these basic preliminaries Fretilin set out to try and run a country that had been abandoned by all but one of its senior bureaucrats. Almost all nuns and priests had left, which

\textsuperscript{189} Hill, op. cit., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{190} João Carrascalão, interviewed by the author, Sydney, April 1994.
\textsuperscript{191} Hill, op. cit., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{192} Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 152.
\textsuperscript{193} Chega! Part four 2005:19.
\textsuperscript{194} Hill, op. cit., p. 188.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, p. 192.
had deprived the territory of most of its teachers. Still, when the first foreign journalists arrived on 11 September, essential services had been restored and shops were re-opening. Stocks of flour in private warehouses were confiscated for a central pool to deal with the food shortage. There were queues outside the Fretilin centre at the military barracks at Taibesse (in Dili) for food rations and transportation to rural areas. High on the priority list was the resettlement of village people who had fled to Dili during the civil war. Swiss delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) soon directed a relief operation with doctors recruited from Australia. They administered the Dili hospital and an outpatient clinic, and inspected the Fretilin gaols. Two members of the Australian parliament, Senator Gietzelt and Mr. Ken Fry, both members of the Australian Parliament, visited the Portuguese Timor in mid-September. Apart from minor border clashes, they found the territory at peace, which contrasted wildly with reports emanating from Indonesian sources, telling of a civil war still in progress in large areas, and that Fretilin rule, where the party had gained the upper hand, was chaotic and based on terror against the population. On 16 September Fretilin’s Central Committee declared that in its eyes Portugal remained sovereign, and called for the Portuguese to return and supervise the decolonisation process. The statement also called for a joint peacekeeping force of Indonesian and East Timorese troops to patrol the border.

A team from the Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid – Timor (ASIAT), consisting of one doctor, a manager and four nurses, maintained four clinics for maternal and infant health care; it was also preparing a training programme for rural preventive health care. The Chinese school in Dili re-opened in October 1975, but only a few other schools had opened by November. On 11 October, the Commission for the Control and Supervision of the Economy opened its offices in the centre of Dili. Shortly thereafter, fifty people were working there and the queues outside Taibesse had switched to this office.

All the while, tension was building at the border. The complete defeat of UDT and the emergence of Fretilin as the de facto government of East Timor, with a likely prospect that it would soon gain international recognition, was something that Indonesia could not accept. Operasi Komodo was now turning into a military operation, rather than merely one of obstructionism and propaganda. Before 24 September (when UDT crossed into Indonesia) Fretilin reported border incursions by Indonesian troops. Raids had already been made on 14 September in the regions of Bobonaro, Atsabe and Suai, and an Indonesian soldier had been captured by Fretilin troops. He identified himself as belonging to the 315 Battalion of Kostrad, the Strategic Reserve Command, and said that he had been inside East Timor five days before his capture on 14 September. Antara, the official Indonesian news agency, announced at the end of September 1975 that the leadership of UDT had together with Kota and Trabalhista formed a coalition called MAC, Movimento Anticomunista. The report stated that the President of UDT, Francisco Lopes da Cruz, favoured integration with Indonesia and had called on Indonesia to intervene militarily to end the crisis.

Lopes da Cruz was also said to have expressed his gratitude to the Indonesian Government for accepting his party’s petition for the integration of East Timor into Indonesia.

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198 ACFOA, op. cit., p. 8.
199 Hill, op. cit., p. 194.
200 Ibid, p. 189.
201 Ibid, p. 163-165.
202 Ibid, p. 146.
Balibó – a point of no return

Having thus created an invitation to intervene militarily, the Indonesian side wasted no time. Indonesian troops took Batugadé, inside East Timor, on 8 October. This involved not only a major step from border incursions to actual control of foreign territory, but also led to a tragic event which still plagues Australian/Indonesian relations.

On 10 October three men – Greg Shackleton, Tony Stewart and Gary Cunningham - from Melbourne’s Channel 7 television network arrived in Dili. They stayed only for the day in the capital, where they interviewed José Ramos Horta, and Apodeti leader José Osório Soares, now jailed by Fretilin, before they briefly went to the Hotel Turismo for lunch and to leave their excess luggage. They then arranged to be driven in a jeep towards the border area by a young man, Paulino Gomes. On their way, they met with a returning team, led by Tony Maniaty, from Australia’s state television, ABC, who had come under artillery fire at Balibo and advised them not to go any further. Two days later, they were followed by two reporters, Malcolm Rennie and Brian Peters, from Sydney-based Channel 9. The latter two were picked up by José Ramos Horta at the Dili airport, who travelled with them to Balibó. On 13 October four Portuguese television reporters followed the Australian crews to the border. During this period Indonesia claimed that it was not involved in any fighting inside East Timor, and that all fighting was between Timorese factions. It was precisely in order to find out the truth in this matter that the reporters from Australia and Portugal decided to visit the border area. The two Australian television crews joined up at Balibó on October 13.

Horta went back to Dili the following day, bringing the crew’s last film with him, made during a patrol to the border with Falintil soldiers. The Portuguese journalists followed suit, after failing to persuade the Australians to come with them.

Adelino Gomes brought with him Greg Shackleton’s last written report. On 16 October Indonesian troops attacked the town and the remaining five journalists were killed. Their 206 One of the five, Gary Cunningham, was a New Zealander. Two, Brian Peters and Malcolm Rennie, travelled on British passports; Greg Shackleton and Tony Stewart were Australians (Ibid, p. 172).
207 An exhaustive account of this fatal incident can be found in Jill Jolliffe, Cover-Up. The inside story of the Balibo five, Scribe Publications, Melbourne 2001.
painting of the word "AUSTRALIA" in huge letters on the wall of the building in which they stayed, had obviously not induced in the attackers any leniency towards them.

While Jakarta’s official position was that it had not crossed into Portuguese territory, there was increasing public evidence to the contrary. This posed a huge dilemma for Canberra. On October 17, the Foreign department ordered the ambassador to Jakarta, Richard Woolcott, to formally register Australia’s “extreme disappointment” at Indonesia’s military incursion into Portuguese Timor. Canberra strongly suggested that Woolcott register Australia’s dismay with Harry Tjan and Benny Murdani – Woolcott’s two best sources.

In making these points to the Indonesians, we should like you to say that your remarks should be taken as formal expressions of disapproval of Indonesia’s actions and that it is likely that the Australian Government would need to refer to this fact in the inevitable public debate that would follow in Australia when the full extent of Indonesian involvement … becomes public knowledge.  

In his cabled reply to Canberra on October 19, Woolcott defiantly said the latest instructions “pose difficulties for us … It may be ironical, but perhaps we are too well informed as a result of the confidence shown us by Tjan and Murdani. We probably know things that only these two Indonesians know that we know”, Woolcott said. Even Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik probably wasn’t as well informed as Australia’s diplomats of Indonesia’s plans, he said. As well as not wanting to jeopardise their Indonesian sources, the diplomats wouldn’t compromise more secret sources. It is known that Australian intelligence agencies that intercepted Indonesian radio traffic were aware of the deaths on October 16 and that the Federal Government was informed that night.

The following day Woolcott cabled Canberra: “As you will know …. it now appears likely that at least four and possibly all five of the Australian journalists were killed in the fighting in and around Balibó.” If true, this was a “sad and dreadful development”. … Woolcott was concerned about the risk of “serious consequences” if Australian public opinion was inflamed “if it appears that Australian casualties are the result of Indonesian intervention”. The first that Greg Shackleton’s wife, Shirly, heard of the possible fate of her husband was a radio report on 17 October, which said that he was missing. On 18 October Ambassador Woolcott called on the Indonesian foreign minister, Adam Malik, to ask for Indonesia’s help in locating the journalists. Malik claimed that any fighting in Balibó would have been between Timorese factions and did not involve Indonesian troops – a claim that Australia knew to be false. Yet Canberra issued no formal protest. For the next week the Australian government was forced to say only that it held ‘grave fears’ for the fate of the journalists.

209 Daley and Hyland, op. cit., p.15.
210 According to Australian journalist Cameron Stewart, the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), was, through its station in Australia’s Northern Territory, intercepting Indonesian military communications in the East Timor region as well as most Fretilin and UDT radio traffic. This gave Canberra detailed knowledge about East Timor’s civil war in August 1975 and of Operasi Komodo, down to the smallest details of troop movements and attack plans. As early as 30 September 1975 DSD intercepts revealed plans by the Indonesian army to attack four East Timor towns near the border of Indonesian West Timor, including Balibó. Stewart has spoken to intelligence officers who claim they have seen the original Defence Signals Directorate transcripts of 16 October 1975, as well as with a former Cabinet member of the Whitlam government who confirmed to Stewart that Prime Minister Whitlam received the DSD report on the killings on the day they occurred. The report led to urgent conversations between Prime Minister Whitlam, Foreign Minister Don Willesee, Defence Minister Bill Morrison and the head of the Department of Defence, Sir Arthur Tange. The outcome of the discussions was that the government could not divulge the contents of the secret report even to the relatives of the newsmen because it would compromise Australia’s extensive electronic spy operations in Indonesia (Stewart, op. cit., p. 25).
211 Ibid.
In the following weeks, Australian diplomats engaged in a fruitless and humiliating series of representations with Jakarta officials, seeking some confirmation on the fate of the journalists that could satisfy distraught families and an increasingly alarmed Australian public. On October 20, Harry Tjan told the embassy that four bodies had been found at Balibo. The embassy passed on the information to Canberra but, because of the source, warned it should not be used in any public statement. There was also on that day a propaganda broadcast from Kupang, in which Francisco Lopes da Cruz said that the Australian journalists were communists, who were integrated with Fretilin and deserved to be killed. On 25 October Indonesia officially confirmed the deaths of the five newsmen, maintaining that they had been shot dead in crossfire between Timorese factions.

On October 27, 1975, 11 days after Indonesia began a covert military operation to wrest control of Portuguese Timor, senior Australian diplomat Graham Feakes wrote to Foreign Minister Don Willesee. Willesee had privately expressed fears that Jakarta was providing Australia with so much detail about its plans that it would put the Australian Government “in a position of conniving with them in their military intervention”. Feakes replied: “Your fear is certainly well-founded …” He nonetheless argued against Willesee’s suggestion that the Australian embassy stop using its two main sources in Jakarta – Harry Tjan, director of an Indonesian think-tank that was the diplomatic arm of a covert plan to ensure Timor fell into Jakarta’s hands, and General Benny Murdani, who was in charge of the military operation. To stop the flow of information now, Feakes said, would not lessen the charge of conniving, given that the embassy had already been getting information from the pair for a long time.

For its part Indonesia was confident that, because it had so entrusted Australia’s diplomats, the Federal Government would find a way to support its actions, that Canberra was in fact captive to its Indonesian sources of information. The final verification of this theory came when Australia did not react to the killing of Balibo five, as they later were to be called. Final confirmation of the journalists’ deaths came on November 12, when Ambassador Woolcott in Jakarta was handed over four boxes of remains – charred bone fragments, some camera gear, notebooks and paper - and the embassy doctor “confirmed to the best of his knowledge they were human remains.” The remains were put into a single coffin and on December 5 buried in a small ceremony in Jakarta.

The quiet before the storm

On October 16, 1975 a small task force from ACFOA (Australian Council For Overseas Aid), led by James Dunn, former Australian consul to Timor, flew into Dili to survey the situation - on the very same day five journalists were killed in Balibo. In the evening, Fretilin’s Vice President Nicolau Lobato informed them of a massive Indonesian attack on the border towns Maliana and Balibo and of the missing journalists; their fate still unknown.

The ACFOA team met several times with Fretilin’s President and the Central Committee; it also met with the Economic Commission and the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and ASIAT (Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid Timor) two NGO’s present in Timor since September 1, the latter providing the backbone for the medical services of the whole colony. They also met with Bishop Ribeiro and the Portuguese Governor Lemos.
Pires on Ataúro. The team then visited a number of towns and regions and made assessments of food and medical needs and also visited at least half of the prisoners in Fretilin’s hands. They found that 80% of East Timor was peaceful, and that Fretilin had been surprisingly effective in its administration of the province, though the lack of trained personnel was obvious. Distribution of food functioned fairly well, and the population appeared to be quiet and orderly. There were only few reports of looting and other forms of crime.\footnote{ACFOA (Australian Council for Overseas Aid), \textit{Report on Visit to East Timor for the ACFOA Timor Task Force}. Canberra: ACFOA, 1975, p. 18.} However, there were deep social disruptions in some areas, such as Maubisse, Liquica and Ermera, “where bitter inter-tribal and inter-family vengeance will be difficult to heal.”\footnote{Ibid, p. 4.} Interestingly, they also reported of a woman’s army unit of 100 under a woman commander at the front.\footnote{Ibid, p. 9.}

On the evening of 17 October, the ACFOA team sent a cable to the Australian Government with the following text:

\begin{quote}
Information from Fretilin and non-Fretilin sources indicates that the situation at the border has deteriorated seriously during the past 12 hours with strong evidence of extensive Indonesian involvement. We are convinced if present situation continues great loss of life and human suffering in East Timor could not be averted. In these circumstances, bearing in mind the humanitarian purpose of our mission, we urge the Australian Government as a matter of urgency to call on the Indonesian authorities to restrain forces operating from each side of the border and to pursue objectives of negotiated settlement.\footnote{Ibid, p. 5.}
\end{quote}

Contrary to Indonesian claims, ACFOA’s view of Fretilin was that it was not communist, but a ‘moderate nationalist socialist movement which has a left wing’.\footnote{Ibid, p. 4.} The observations and experiences of ASIAT, Red Cross, and press representatives, suggested that Fretilin had strong support in the areas under its control.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 16-18.}

The ACFOA team were disturbed to find that not only was there no contact between the parties to the conflict - Fretilin, UDT and the Portuguese - but that no effort was being made to establish such contacts. The Governor and his administration were in Ataúro, and appeared to be opposed to seeking contact with UDT or Fretilin. The Fretilin leaders clearly wanted Portugal to return and resume decolonisation.\footnote{ACFOA, op. cit., p. 17.} During the whole period of the Fretilin administration, Fretilin had continued to recognize the authority of Portugal; the Governor’s house had not been entered, the administration blocks not used and the Portuguese flag had been raised each day in the city square.\footnote{Sue Rabbitt Roff, \textit{Timor’s Anschluss. Indonesian and Australian Policy in East Timor 1974-1976}. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, p. 71.}

The resulting report was put together in Sydney on 28 October 1975, with additions by James Dunn, the leader of the group, on 7 November. The ACFOA report recommended that the Australian Government ought to (I) publicly declare its support for the principle of self determination for the people of East Timor, and; (II) Use its full diplomatic efforts in urging the Indonesian Government to desist from its active support and encouragement of military activities around the border area. In his additions to the report, Dunn wrote that

\begin{quote}
The new men of the Central Committee, however, appear to place great emphasis on their capability to resist an invasion. Their success so far in resisting attacks by UDT/Indonesian troops may have blinded them to the
\end{quote}
serious problems ahead on the diplomatic plane. … While the moderators (Xavier, Horta, Alarico Fernandes and others) see the need to resume contacts with Portuguese authorities and to find ways of negotiating with Indonesia, the conservatives seem to place extraordinary store on self-reliance. … Underlying these attitudes is a lack of understanding of the situation in this region and of how to go about coming to terms with Portugal and Indonesia. I have the strong impression that Xavier, Horta and Fernandes lack the force of some of their opponents.227

Dunn’s assessment would, within the next few years, prove to be remarkably foresighted.

Simultaneously, the Portuguese and Indonesian Foreign Ministers had met in Rome between 1-3 November 1975 to discuss the situation in Timor. The two Ministers agreed in a joint ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ that the fundamental responsibility for the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor lay with Portugal, and that Portugal should undertake all efforts towards a speedy and orderly implementation of an act of self-determination by the people of Portuguese Timor. Both ministers also agreed on the need to hold a joint meeting between Portugal and all political parties in Portuguese Timor simultaneously. On his return to Lisbon from Rome, Portugal’s Foreign Minister Melo Antunes was quoted as saying that it had been agreed that no power should intervene in Timor ‘least of all Indonesia’ and that ‘there should be no pressure by Indonesia on the people of Timor’.

On 11 November there was a Fretilin demonstration in Dili in support of Angola’s formal independence from Portugal that day. Speeches were conducted entirely in Tetun. Also on that day Whitlam’s Labor government in Australia was dismissed. The Opposition parties that controlled the Senate had used their numbers to block the provision of finance to the Government and so the country was gripped by its worst ever constitutional crisis with the Government teetering towards bankruptcy. Eventually, the British-appointed Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, intervened on November 11 by sacking the Whitlam Government and installing the Opposition leader Malcolm Fraser as caretaker Prime Minister, “pitching Australian domestic politics into a frenzy and its foreign policy into limbo”.229 The new Government claimed that, as a caretaker, it could only follow the previous Labour Government’s policy on East Timor.

On 13 November the first food aid to reach East Timor since the coup arrived on the barge Alanna Fay, chartered from Darwin by ACFOA and with relief provided by both ACFOA and ASIAT, and paid for by the organization of the 2/2 commandos in Australia, consisting of soldiers who had been stationed in Timor during WWII.231 The barge carried milk powder, rice, corn, cloth, flour, and penicillin and other drugs. Diesel and petrol also arrived, destined for the distribution of the relief, as did seed, brought in the hope that there would be time for

227 ACFOA, op. cit., p. 2.
229 Rabbit Roff, op. cit., p. 58.
230 Walsh, op. cit., p. 9. It would be quite erroneous and unfair to judge Whitlam’s four years as Prime Minister solely from his East Timor record. During the Whitlam years, the country’s ‘White Australia’s policy’ was abandoned, conscription was ended and no-fault divorce, aboriginal land rights, a free universal health scheme and equal pay for women were introduced. The Whitlam government in February 1975 allowed the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam (the Vietcong) to set up an office in Australia, and denounced the US 1972 Christmas bombing of Hanoi. Whitlam also insisted upon an investigation of American secret facilities at Pine Gap and Narrangur in Central Australia, and in November 1975 accused the CIA of funding the conservative opposition in Australia. Not surprisingly, many in the Australian left, such as East Timor activist Denis Freney, chose to see a link between such moves and Kerr’s dismissal of the Whitlam government (William Blum, The CIA, a forgotten history. London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1986, pp. 278-281. See also Denis Freney, The CIA’s Australian Connection. Sydney: The author, 1977.)
231 Personal communication from Patricia Thatcher.
planting before the wet season set in. Two days later the barge sailed out of Dili harbour laden with coffee, the first export sale of the Fretilin administration.232

In pursuance of the above-mentioned Rome communiqué, Portugal’s National Decolonisation Commission sent a telegram to the presidents of Fretilin, UDT and Apodeti proposing that talks between Portugal and representatives of the three political parties be held in Darwin, Australia between 15 and 20 November. According to a communiqué issued by the Decolonisation Commission on 29 November 1975, the three parties had agreed in principle to the holding of the conference, but difficulties arose on the part of UDT and Apodeti concerning the date and location. The meeting never took place. As if the chaotic situation in Timor (and Australia!) was not enough, Portugal was on the brink of a civil war. On 24 November 1975 the MFA was ousted after an attempted coup by left-wing officers had been pre-empted by troops led by Lieutenant-Colonel António Ramalho Eanes and Major Jaime Neves.234 A few hundred commando soldiers led by these two men took charge of all army regiments in Lisbon. There was not much fighting, and not many casualties, which probably saved Portugal from a civil war. Even so, a state of emergency was declared, and Lisbon was under curfew on November 26. For Timor this turmoil in Portugal was catastrophic. It meant that the leaders in Lisbon were pre-occupied with far more pressing matters than formulating a constructive policy on Timor for the isolated Portuguese Governor on Ataúro.235

Declarations of independence and integration

When Balibó and Maliana fell on 16 October, Atabae and Bobonaro became the Fretilin front line. Atabae fell on 28 November. Especially the loss of the Fretilin stronghold Atabae meant “a crushing blow to our morale”, in the words of José Ramos Horta, who at the time was in Canberra in the company of Alarico Fernandes, attempting to inform various embassies of the escalating Indonesian aggression, and the possibility that the territory would soon unilaterally

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232 Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 189. The coffee was sold by Jim Zantis, of ASIAT, to a firm in Sydney, and the money, almost 40,000$A was deposited in a joint account at the Darwin branch of the Commonwealth Bank. Being a joint account, it required two signatures, that of José Ramos Horta and Juvinal Inasios, Fretilin’ Finance Secretary. The latter is assumed to have died in Timor in 1978, and Fretilin never saw the money again until many years later.


234 The background to the failed coup was the widening schism between leftists and non-leftists in Portuguese politics. The MFA allowed elections in the spring of 1975 for a constituent assembly. In these elections the Communist party finished third. Up until then the MFA could claim that it represented the political legality in Portugal after the 1974 coup. The Socialist Party and the Popular Democrats, the winners in the election, could now claim that they represented an even larger part of this political legality. After the elections strife continued among Socialists, Communists and extreme leftists within the unions, the news media and local governments. In July, after Premier Vasco dos Santo Gonçalves had sanctioned a leftist takeover of the Socialist newspaper República, the Socialists quit Gonçalves government. Gonçalves was ousted in August and a new cabinet dominated by Socialists was installed. It was this cabinet at which the leftist coup of November 1975 was directed. After the failed coup, MFA’s power was broken. From then on the military was confined to the barracks, in Western European fashion.

235 As mentioned above, the transition of power from Whitlam to Malcolm Fraser saw a continuation of the same policy as Jakarta’s covert military operations on the ground further advanced. On November 25, 1975, Ambassador Woolcott – acting on Fraser’s orders – saw Suharto at his private residence (for discretion) and told him that Fraser felt that Indonesia was entitled to have “an appropriate solution” to the Timor issue, that he wanted “close personal ties” with Suharto and that his foreign minister (Andrew Peacock) would visit soon. Fraser asked Suharto to treat the message as secret (Paul Kelly, ‘Policy failure our legacy in East Timor’, The Australian, Wednesday September 13, 2000, p. 25).
declare independence. This was not at all an uncontested measure among the Fretilin leadership; Horta for one had been among those who had argued against it. When it chose to do so on the same day as Atabae fell, 28 November 1975, this was done more in desperation than anything else, and with a feeling that it was a solution forced upon Fretilin by the passivity of Portugal, and by the refusal of the world at large to intervene in any way.

With Indonesian troops inside East Timor, and a passive Portuguese administration on Ataúro, Fretilin declared East Timor to be an independent Republic on 28 November 1975. Fretilin was well aware of MPLA’s declaration of independence in Angola on 11 November, and of the fact that within a week thirty countries had recognised the new Angolan government. Also, some two years earlier, in September 1973, the PAIGC (Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) had unilaterally proclaimed the independence of Guinea-Bissau at a time when the administrative capital Bissau and all other towns were still controlled by the Portuguese administration and army and war was still raging. More than 70 States recognised the Republic of Guinea-Bissau in the weeks that followed and 93 States voted on November 2, in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution expressing its satisfaction with the recent accession to independence of the people of Guinea Bissau. Ironically, the Whitlam government recognised the revolutionary movement in Guinea-Bissau already at an early stage.

In the afternoon of that day, crowds gathered in the square outside the main administration building in Dili, and troops paraded in their camouflage uniforms. Shortly before 6 p.m. Xavier do Amaral, president of Fretilin arrived, riding in the official black Mercedes of the Portuguese administration. Rosa Muki Bonaparte moved to the flagpole and raised the new red, black and yellow flag, which most present were seeing for the first time. A minute’s silence in honour of the dead was followed by 20 cannon shots. Amaral read the proclamation of independence, and the national anthem Pátria, freshly penned by Francisco Borja da Costa and Afonso Redentor Araújo (brother of Abílio), was sung. News of the declaration of independence was then broadcast to the outside world via Dili’s Marconi Communication Centre. Five foreigners, all Australians, witnessed the ceremony – journalists Roger East, Michael Richardson and Jill Jolliffe, David Scott of Community Aid Abroad and retired soldier and Timor resident Sam Kruger. The day after the proclamation of independence Xavier do Amaral was sworn in as president of RDTL (República Democrática do Timor-Leste, the Democratic Republic of East Timor, and a draft constitution was proclaimed.

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236 Less than a week earlier, at a Timor Conference in Melbourne held 22-23 November, Horta, perhaps in a last-ditch attempt to lessen some Australian’s ill-founded fear of “another Cuba at our doorstep”, stated that Fretilin “is not a communist party; it is not a political party, it is a nationalist movement. … within the movement there are people with different political beliefs, different religious beliefs, different ideas about economic development” (Timor Information Service, No. 2, 3 December 1975. Fitzroy: Timor Information Service.)

237 Dunn, op. cit., p. 275.

238 One option that had been discussed was to declare independence on December 1; being the date when Spain’s domination of Portugal was ended in 1640 (Horta, op. cit., p. 97). This shows the degree to which the political elite in Portuguese Timor was culturally attached to the “mother country”.


241 Aarons & Domn, op. cit., p. 16.

242 Hill, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

243 Dunn, op. cit., p. 278.
Declaration of independence, 28 November 1975.
Source: Timor Archives Photo Gallery.

Fretilin’s declaration of independence was recognised by fifteen countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Principe, Albania, Benin, Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, People’s Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea (Conakry), Democratic Republic of Korea, Laos, Vietnam, and Tanzania. The African countries extended formal recognition, while the others gave less formal declarations of support. Portugal did not recognise the declaration, nor did Australia.

The declaration of independence led to an immediate, and ominous, response from across the border. The day after the Fretilin declaration of independence, four East Timorese parties, UDT, Apodeti, Kota and Trabalhista, declared East Timor’s integration with Indonesia. This declaration of integration was said to have been signed in Balibó in East Timor by six leaders of these parties, and since then it has been called the ‘Balibó Declaration.’ Portugal, still considering itself the administering power, flatly rejected both the declaration of independence and the Balibó declaration. Legally speaking, the Balibó declaration is, as pointed out by Matsuno, at best a statement by a tiny percentage of the people of East Timor. UDT could claim to represent almost half of the population, but the UDT leaders had no authority from the other members of the Central Committee; nor did they have a mandate from the party membership to make any request to the Indonesian Government. Also, among the objectives and principles of UDT, specified in Article 1 of its Provisional Statuses of August 1, 1974, is ‘Rejection of the integration of Timor into any potential foreign country’. For any UDT representatives to sign, on behalf of his party, a document which contradicts the statuses of that party without even consulting his constituency, can hardly be considered binding for anybody except for, perhaps, that said person himself. Regarding the signatories from Trabalhista and Kota, these two parties had virtually no part in the political process in East Timor, and their membership was practically non-existent at the time. José Martins, one of the signatories, later stated that:

248 Thatcher and Guterres, op. cit.
249 Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 337.
250 Thatcher and Guterres, op. cit.
The official statement of integration of East Timor with Indonesia is farsical since it was written on Bali, Indonesia on December 2, 1975. While Fretilin on November 26, 1975 was declaring its unilateral declaration of independence at Dili, our movement (MAC) was declaring the integration more than 1000 kms away in Bali at the luxurious Peneda View Hotel which actually belongs to Colonel Sugianto, assistant of General Murtopo. It was a magnificent farce without a true mandate from our people. 251

On 1 December the Cabinet of the Democratic Republic of East Timor was sworn in. The Cabinet consisted of eleven ministers, three of whom were at the front.252 The ministers were assisted by seven vice-ministers. The main appointments were: Nicolau Lobato, Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri, Minister of State for Political Affairs, Abílio dos Reis Araújo, Minister for Economic and Social Affairs (he was in Portugal at the time); José Gonçalves, Minister for Economic Coordination; Rogério Lobato, Minister for Defence; Alarico Fernandes, Minister for Internal Affairs and Security; and José Ramos Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Information.253 Mari Alkatirí had just returned from Africa, where his successful lobbying was one reason behind the speedy recognition of East Timor’s independence. He now occupied the third position in Fretilin, behind Xavier do Amaral and Nicolau Lobato. His rise in the party made him the most influential spokesman for the left-wing factions in Fretilin.254

That same night Radio Kupang beamed into Dili a ‘special broadcast in English to Australian listeners, from the mountains of East Timor’, purportedly from Balibó. It told of the declaration of integration of East Timor into Indonesia and warned foreign nationals in the territory that ‘anti-Fretilin forces’ would not take responsibility for their safety in the future.255 Since Balibó was where the five newsmen had been killed on October 16, the symbolism of this broadcast was not very subtle.

On 2 December, the businessman and self-styled Australian representative in Dili, Frank Favaro, flew his light airplane from Dili to Kupang, as was his weekly routine, to fill up his stock of supplies. Quite out of the routine, he spied an armada of Indonesian warships heading towards Dili. He immediately returned, and warned the town of the upcoming invasion. Australian intelligence, independently of Favaro, alerted the government in Canberra, and thirteen Australian nationals were evacuated to Ataúro by the Red Cross, later to be flown to Darwin.256 Only the reporter Roger East refused to leave.

There was a futile attempt by Fretilin to internationalise the conflict. On 4 December the Central Committee decided to send three ministers – Mari Alkatiri, José Ramos Horta and Rogério Lobato – out of East Timor to continue the diplomatic work and to take the East Timor issue to the United Nations.257 Abílio Araújo was already in Portugal at the time, as was his wife Guilhermina, Fretilin’s deputy minister for economic relations, and Roque Rodrigues, ambassador designate to Mozambique.258

Indonesia’s Information Minister, Mashuri, then issued a twelve point statement on Timor, stating that Indonesia had a moral obligation to protect the people of East Timor. It also

252 Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 220.
253 Dunn, op. cit., p. 278.
254 Shoesmith, op. cit., p. 238.
257 Hill, op. cit., p. 208. The Australian authorities had before that evacuated the four Australians and Sam Krueger to Darwin, where David Scott lobbied successfully for the three Timorese ministers to be taken out of Portuguese Timor on a final Australian evacuation aircraft (Clinton Fernandes, The Independence of East Timor, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011, p. 43.)
258 Horta 1987, op. cit., p. 100).
highlighted Indonesia’s concern for its own security; the burden of refugees on Indonesia, the failure of the administering power (Portugal) to meet the terms of the Rome memorandum, and accused Fretilin of having started the fighting. According to Mashuri, East Timor was now judicially a "no-man’s land".259

On the eve of Indonesia’s full-scale invasion of East Timor, President Ford and Secretary Kissinger stopped in Jakarta en route from China where they had just met with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Formerly classified documents have shed light on Fords’ and Kissinger’s’ meeting with Suharto on December 6 1975. In one document, a memorandum from Minister of State Henry Kissinger to President Ford re “Your visit to Indonesia,” prepared some two weeks before the two were to visit to Jakarta, Kissinger acknowledges that the Indonesians had been “maneuvering to absorb the colony” through negotiations with Portugal and “covert military operations in the colony itself,” but he apparently did not expect an overt invasion using US -supplied military equipment. Indeed, his memo and a briefing paper on “Indonesia and Portuguese Timor” both indicate that to do so would violate US law, suggesting that this restrained Jakarta. In contrast to Indonesia’s view that Fretilin was “Communist-dominated”, the author of the briefing paper more accurately characterized it as “vaguely left-wing.”260

Suharto remarked during the meeting that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions, but that Fretilin had not co-operated with negotiations and had declared its independence unilaterally. Suharto then assured the Americans that “the four other parties” favour integration. “We want your understanding,” Suharto continued, “if we deem it necessary to take rapid or drastic action.”261 Ford and Kissinger took great pains to assure Suharto that they would not oppose the invasion. Ford was unambiguous: “We will understand and will not press you on the invasion. We understand the problem and the intentions you have.” Kissinger did indeed stress that “the use of US-made arms could create problems,” but then added that, “it depends on how we construe it; whether it is in self-defence or is a foreign operation.” In any case, Kissinger added: “It is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly.”262

Anyway, one may assume that the future of the tiny, former Portuguese colony was not foremost on the minds of Ford and Kissinger at the time. Their main concern being instead changing political realities in Vietnam, where North and South now united under a communist regime, and Cambodia, where the Khmer Rouge under its leader Pol Pot had been in power since April 1975, and now evacuated cities and towns in a bizarre social experiment which was eventually to cost millions of lives. Relations between Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Cambodia worsened steadily due to ideological differences and border clashes. Cambodia forged close ties with China, while Vietnam was backed by the Soviet Union. In this complex situation, Ford and Kissinger were hoping to find ways for the interests of the US and China to coincide, and in their meeting with Suharto they expressed that the two major powers indeed had similar strategies re the two new communist neighbours of Indonesia, namely to balance them off against each other.263

While Portuguese Timor was perhaps ‘not foremost on their minds’, it might be assumed that the recent, and in one case – Angola - still ongoing, communist takeovers in Portugal’s

259 Sue Rabbitt Roff, Rabbitt Roff, Sue (1992): Timor’s Anschluss. Indonesian and Australian Policy in East Timor 1974-1976. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, pp. 62-63. These were also the arguments put forth by the Indonesian government in the booklets which were issued during the end of the 1970s/first half of the 1980s.
261 Burr and Evans, op. cit., p. 6.
262 Ibid, p. 6.
former African colonies had something to do with their wish that staunchly anti-communist Indonesia incorporate the half-island as smoothly as possible.

The meeting occurred less than a week before Australia went to the polls to resolve their constitutional crisis. Australia’s pre-occupation with the election may even have influenced Suharto’s decision to attack Dili.\textsuperscript{264} The coinciding political chaos in Portugal made the timing optimal for a quick military operation. Swift action was necessary before more important countries than those from Africa and other parts of the Third World would decide to recognise the proclaimed Republic of East Timor. The thinking was probably right, but implementation went awry.

\textsuperscript{264} Paul Dominic Twomey, \textit{Australia, the United States, and the East Timor Controversy}. Unpublished M. A. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, The Graduate School, Department of Political Science, 1984, p. 42. And not only that. Patricia Thatcher points out (personal communication, March 1997) that Suharto had at the meeting in Wonosobo given Whitlam the impression that the Indonesian military would not invade East Timor. Thatcher suggests the possibility that Suharto kept his personal promise to Whitlam and changed his mind only when Whitlam was no longer in power and it was clear that he would lose the upcoming election.
PART 3. OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

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10 Invasion and its aftermath

Attack on Dili

On 7 December 1975 the Portuguese Government informed the UN Security Council that early that day military forces of the Republic of Indonesia had launched an offensive action against Portuguese Timor. On the same day Portugal broke diplomatic relations with Indonesia.1 Benny Murdani, Indonesia’s Minister of Defence and commander of the invading forces, wrote of the military operation:

The sun had not risen on the morning of the 7th December 1975, when the combined forces of UDT, Apodeti and the Indonesian volunteers, along with the ABRI joint force, attacked Dili. It was no longer an intelligence operation with limited military inputs, but a full scale military operation supported by all elements of the Indonesian armed forces.2

The description is correct, except for one important point – the claim that Dili was attacked by UDT, Apodeti and Indonesian volunteers is nonsensical. According to all eyewitnesses all the invading troops were Indonesian.3 Their recollections are supported by the following paragraph from the Murdani text:

Dili ... since the darkness of the early morning had been bombarded by the Indonesian Navy. An hour later, a number of aircraft disgorged hundreds of paratroopers from KOSTRAD XVIII Brigade dropping them into the township. Parallel to this, on the ground, a beach landing brought in a battalion of Indonesian marines.4

Patricia Thatcher and Justino Guterres (who himself witnessed the invasion) have interviewed a great number of Timorese who were in Dili during the invasion but who now live in Australia. Their version of events, as told to Thatcher and Guterres, was that the paratroopers landed first and that the shelling of Dili by the Indonesian navy did not take place until 9 am. Apart from the denial of any Timorese presence among the invaders, their story is identical to the one given by the then Indonesian Minister of Defence.5

The Indonesian government maintained for many years that its regular forces never invaded East Timor, but that actions were taken by ‘volunteers’ responding to the calls of the East Timorese. The New York Times observed already on 8 December 1975 that Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik’s statement on the ‘volunteers’ was a response to the warnings of American diplomats that military action with the use of American material could jeopardise

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3 However, according to CAVR (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste, The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor), some selected East Timorese ‘partisans’ were among the invading forces. CAVR, Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR). Executive Summary. Dili: CAVR, 2005, part four, p. 20.
4 Thatcher & Guterres, op. cit.
5 Ibid
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proposed US military aid to Indonesia.\(^6\) To accomplish this charade, all identifying marks on military vehicles and uniforms had been removed, and soldiers used weapons of non-American origin, during the invasion and their previous incursions and attacks across the border from West Timor into Portuguese Timor.\(^7\)

In a bizarre twist of coincidence, the nonsensical statement that the invasion was carried out by volunteers was refuted by the appearance on the scene of the invasion of a small group of Australian teenagers, who while attempting to sail around Papua New Guinea in a fibre glass ketch had lost their direction completely after encountering a storm. With a damaged radio, and running out of fresh water, they followed the coastline of an unknown island until they spotted the lights of a town. As they approached, the lights turned into what looked like ‘a Chinese New Year’s celebration or something. Wild and bright and gay …’. Closer to the event, they came across five red barrels in the water. Finding out in his sailor’s manual that this meant “war”, the skipper quickly turned around and headed for the open sea. They were soon overtaken by an Indonesian patrol boat, which conveyed to them the clear message to get away and stay away.\(^8\)

Operasi Komodo was now a thing of the past, and Operasi Seraja (operation Lotus), the code-name of the military invasion, had commenced.\(^9\) Fretilin realised that they could not defend Dili against the overwhelming military power of the Indonesian army, so the greater part of their armed forces, Falintil, fled to the mountains. With them they took the UDT prisoners as carriers of arms and ammunition and, not least important, a radio transmitter. They left behind about 200 soldiers to stall and inflict casualties on the invading forces. Hundreds of Indonesian paratroopers were also killed before they reached the ground; many others drowned in the bay. In the street fighting that followed the Indonesian soldiers were easy targets from inside the buildings.\(^10\) Still, it was only a matter of hours before the last of the Falintil troops had to flee Dili. The Indonesian soldiers then took out their revenge on the civilian population. James Dunn interviewed about 900 East Timorese refugees in Portugal in January 1977.\(^11\) One refugee gave the following account of events after the landing of the Indonesian paratroopers:

At 2.00 p.m., on 7 December 1975, 59 men, both Chinese and Timorese, were brought onto the wharf. These men were shot one by one, with the crowd being ordered to count. The victims were ordered to stand on the edge of the pier facing the sea, so that when they were shot their bodies fell into the water. Indonesian soldiers stood by and fired at the bodies in the water in the event that there was any further sign of life. Many of the men ... pleaded with the Indonesians, some on their knees, but none of the group was spared.\(^12\)

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\(^11\) Dunn’s visit to Portugal between 5 and 27 January 1977 was made at the initiative of Australian NGO’s, among them Australian Catholic Relief and Community Aid Abroad, who provided funds for the airfare. Dunn reported that there were about 1,500 East Timorese in Lisbon, where they lived in what Dunn described as depressing conditions. Most of them had been expropriated between July and October 1976. The great majority of the Timorese expressed a wish to come to Australia, where many had relatives who had come as refugees during the civil war in August 1975 (J. S. Dunn, *The East Timor Situation – Report on talks with Timorese in Portugal*. Canberra: Legislative Research Service, 11.2. 1977.)

Among those shot on the wharf were the well-known Fretilin activist Rosa Bonaparte, the poet Borja da Costa, who wrote the words to the Fretilin anthem ‘Foho Ramelau’, and Roger East, the last remaining Australian journalist and foreign witness in the territory. Then mass killings continued for about a week, resulting in the deaths of at least 2000 people. Houses were looted and women and girls were abused sexually. The Indonesian troops especially hunted down female relatives of known Fretilin members, as well as those belonging to OPMT and Unetim (União Nacional de Estudantes de Timor). Many of those were imprisoned and then raped, while men were beaten or killed when they tried to defend their wives and daughters.  

The Portuguese abandoned Ataúro one day after the invasion. When they left, they were delayed for twelve hours because the anchor of one vessel was stuck in the sea bottom. This was an irony of almost metaphysical dimensions, if one considers the Timorese myth about the first Portuguese arrival on Timor, in which an anchor fastened to the island was used by the Portuguese as a threat to pull Timor to Portugal.

**Links with the outside**

As mentioned above, The Fretilin armed forces, Falintil, retreated into the mountains. They had at their disposal about 20,000 men, out of which about 2500 were regular troops. The rest had undergone various lengths of military instruction under the Portuguese. They were well armed, as the Portuguese military on Timor had recently received a new arsenal of NATO-grade light weaponry, and they had gained some battle and tactics experience during the civil war and the escalating military situation near the border with West Timor. They were to prove themselves a formidable foe for the less motivated invasion forces. And they possessed a radio transmitter, through which they were able to send messages to northern Australia. This line of communications was named Radio Maubere. The receiver in the Darwin area – at most times hidden at various sites in the North Australian bush - was operated by a team, involving a number of people, including East Timorese Estanislau da Silva, Toni Belo and Agio Pereira.

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Brian Manning, the founder of the group, was an activist member of the Communist party of Australia who, in 1961, had been instrumental in the setting up of the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights.\(^{16}\) The messages from Timor were taped in Darwin and were then sent to Sydney, where Denis Freney of CIET (Campaign for Independent East Timor) forwarded the messages by reading them on the phone to Fretilin leaders in Mozambique. The messages from Timor were taped in Darwin and were then sent to Sydney, where Denis Freney of CIET (Campaign for Independent East Timor) forwarded the messages by reading them on the phone to Fretilin leaders in Mozambique. After the invasion, the Fretilin leaders who had been evacuated out of the territory first travelled from Australia to Portugal.\(^{17}\) The chaotic situation there, plus the fact that Portugal was “a powerless country”, led Mari Alkatiri to fly to Mozambique, where Frelimo, the liberation movement turned government, had always been an inspiration for and supporter of Fretilin.\(^{18}\) President Samora Machel immediately accepted the Fretilin delegation as guests of the country, and the DFSE, *Delegação da Fretilin em serviços no Exterior*, (the Fretilin Delegation for External Service), soon established headquarters at Matola, a city close to Maputo, where they had been offered a tract of land by the Mozambique government.

The little Timorese community at Matola eventually numbered about forty men, women and children. Missions were quickly established in Portugal (Abílio Araújo), Angola (Roque Rodrigues, after a period as ambassador to Mozambique) and the United States (José Ramos Horta); but initially, the newly independent Mozambique was the base. Fretilin women members based in Mozambique were also active diplomatically; they included Ana Pessoa, Filomena de Almeida, Adelina Tilman (part of the team at the UN), Marina Ribeiro and Madalena Boavida.\(^{19}\) The external members of the Fretilin Central committee were Abílio Araújo, José Ramos Horta, Rogério Lobato, Roque Rodrigues, Mari Alkatiri and José Luis Guterres. Each had a different assignment. Broadly, the group was divided into an external front, led by Abílio Araújo, and a diplomatic front, led by José Ramos Horta, Chris Santos, Information Officer for the Democratic Republic of East Timor, was based in Melbourne.\(^{20}\)

CIET became of great importance during the early years of occupation, in that it provided a channel of communication with the outside world for the resistance forces within East Timor. CIET, founded in Sydney, soon had chapters in several other Australian cities, as well as in Britain and New Zealand. It also started publishing a fortnightly bulletin called *East Timor News*, which featured news from East Timor, as well as leaked information from Australian Foreign Affairs and Defence Departments, where some officials strongly opposed Australia’s policy on East Timor.\(^{21}\)

Already from the start, the radio traffic between Timor and Australia caused a controversy, when the Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphs alleged that Foreign Affairs officers tried to obstruct delivery of the messages on the instructions of the Australian Security and Intelligence Organization (ASIO).\(^{22}\) This obstruction was only the beginning of official

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17 Except for José Ramos Horta, who shortly after the invasion went to the UN in New York.
21 Ibid, p. 357.
Australian harassment of this radio link between Timor and Australia. CIET was, however, not the only NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) supporting the East Timorese. On the very day of the invasion, AETA, Australia-East Timor Association, was formed in Melbourne by some two hundred church, aid and welfare workers. AETA differed from CIET in that it did not see itself as a Fretilin support group; it concentrated instead on human rights issues in general. AETA decided that the best way to support East Timor was to assist José Ramos Horta at the UN to campaign for an Indonesian withdrawal. One of the founding members, David Scott, accompanied José Ramos Horta to petition the UN in New York shortly after the invasion.23

Other Australian groups with similar aims soon engaged themselves in the East Timor question, notably AWD (Action for World Development), an ecumenical Australian church-based movement led by Bill Armstrong and with strong links to various aid agencies, social justice activists and churches. Of great importance were AWD’s links with WCC (World Council of Churches), a global, ecumenical platform through which a number of church-based organisations in support of East Timor some years later were to co-operate and co-ordinate their activities. AWD also supported Melbourne-based John Waddingham and his newsletter Timor Information Service. With a first issue in November 1975 and a last in April 1983, Timor Information Service became a parallel source of information to East Timor News for those who were not keen on aligning themselves with Freney’s CIET, and its communist implications.

The creation of CIET and AETA/AWD – soon to be followed by more support groups - elucidated the split between left-wing radicals and more moderate supporters of East Timor, as discussed in the preceding chapter. The latter chose not to focus on party politics, but rather on self-determination, human rights and networking and lobbying, in Australia and abroad.

There will be reason to discuss this rift again later in this book. Suffice to say at the moment that regardless of the degree of liberal stance or “churchiness” of some of the support groups, many in business circles, media or government dismissed them all as pro-Fretilin and suspected communists, much to the detriment to the budding civil society movement in support of East Timor. One whose oft-voiced views to this effect was very influential in conservative circles was B.A. Santamaria, leader of the Catholic right-wing organisation National Civic Council.24 As the attentive reader may remember, he had also been among those who in May 1975 had influenced the two UDT leaders Lopez da Cruz and Mouzinho to break the coalition with Fretilin.

**Atrocities from both sides**

In Timor, ABRI, the Indonesian armed forces, soon realised that enforcements were needed if they were to control more than the immediate precincts of Dili and Baucau. The latter town, East Timor’s second largest, had been taken on 10 December, three days after the assault on Dili. Around Christmas 1975 another 10,000 to 15,000 troops were sent to the territory, and landings were made at Liquica and Maubara, resulting in the massacres of civilians in both places. According to James Dunn’s informants in Portugal, the entire Chinese populations of both towns were killed; while in Remexio and Aileu everybody except children under the age of three were shot because ‘they were infected with the seeds of FRETILIN’. In Suai over 150

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men were shot after trying to prevent the Indonesian troops from ‘interfering with their women folk’. Atrocities were not, however, a prerogative of the Indonesian forces. As mentioned earlier, Fretilin brought along a number of UDT and Apodeti prisoners as carriers when they left Dili ahead of the Indonesian attack on the town. As Indonesian troops advanced, and the security situation deteriorated, this led to vicious resentment towards those seen as actual or potential collaborators with the invaders. On 25 December at least 150 of the detainees were executed near Aileu. Other killings took place at Same and Maubisse. Among those killed were Maggiolo Gouveia, the former chief of police in Dili, UDT leader Mousinho, APODETI’s General Secretary José Osório Soares and António Metan, famous for his role in the 1959 Viqueque uprising (cf chapter 7.) It is unclear who ordered the killings. Xanana Gusmão has suggested many years later that Alarico Fernandes, the Minister for Internal Affairs and Security, and Hermenegildo Alves were responsible.

Xavier do Amaral many years later at a CAVR (cf. Ch. 15) public hearing in December 2003, said under oath that there had never been a formal high-level decision behind the executions. If Fretilin had abandoned the prisoners, do Amaral explained, this would mean that they would fall into Indonesian hands and endanger the resistance. So would retaining the prisoners, who were weak and slow moving and the resistance had few medicines, food, and transport available to spare for them. Xavier told CAVR: “Therefore some of them took a decision to kill them, so that the enemy could not endanger us. Perhaps the opinion was commonly held, more or less commonly, by leaders at all the levels.”

Arsenio Ramos Horta (brother of José) was a UDT-member who was a captive of Fretilin between September 1975 and July 1978. He has vividly described a number of atrocities committed by Fretilin during this period; his general credibility somewhat undermined by his insistence on calling the invading Indonesian military “the Combined Forces” i.e. consisting of UDT, Apodeti, Trabalhista, Kota and Indonesian volunteers, and his praise of the “legitimate Government” which has “done its best to bring peace and stability among the people.”

Reaction at the UN

Five days after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 3485 (XXX) on 12 December 1975. The resolution ‘strongly deplored’ the military intervention and called upon Indonesia ‘to withdraw without delay, in order to enable the people of the Territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence.’ However, fifty-four countries, including the United States, failed to support the resolution (most abstained). Presumably this must have sent a clear signal to Jakarta that the world community lacked the political will to oppose its actions in East Timor. The reaction by Indonesia was a declaration by Foreign Minister Adam Malik, which said that there were no troops to withdraw since the fighting had been done by volunteers.

In spite of this claim, Indonesia soon provided an excuse for the presence of Indonesian military in East Timor (The Balibó Declaration only called for Indonesia to ‘take steps to

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25 IWGIA op. cit., pp. 34-35.
27 Pat Walsh, Winter of the Patriarchs. ETAN, 9 May 2012.
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protect the lives of the people who now consider themselves to be Indonesian'). On the very day of the invasion, a document was signed in Atabae in East Timor by Guilherme Gonçalves (Apodeti), José Martins (Kota), Mario Carrasalao (UDT) and Domingos C. Pereira (Trabalhista), which reads as follows:

The successful actions carried out by the combined Forces of Apodeti, UDT, Kota and Trabalhista against the cities of Baucau and Dili mean de facto that we now control all of East Timor. Owing to the complete incapable way of the Portuguese Government to provide conditions to allow a free expression of the people of East Timor concerning the decolonisation process we have decided to require officially to the Indonesian Government the supply of military forces in such a way that we can restore order and peace so we may obtain conditions to the realisation of the decolonisation through a referendum.

There are two points that are especially interesting in this document, the first being that Baucau is mentioned as the target of a successful action while in fact that town had not yet been attacked; the other is the mention of a forthcoming referendum. If the signatories were promised a referendum, this never materialised.

The background to Resolution 3485 also deserves mention. The resolution was the end result of a draft co-sponsored by Algeria, Cuba, Guyana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Trinidad and Tobago, which was presented, almost immediately following the invasion, in the UN Fourth Committee and then passed on to the General Assembly. Already in the Fourth Committee some countries – Mauretania, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and Thailand – tried unsuccessfully to change the wordings of the draft. The same thing happened in the General Assembly, with a separate vote was held regarding the phrase “deplores the military intervention.”

José Ramos Horta has pointed out that the word “deplore” has a milder tone than the word “condemn” in the UN vocabulary. Thus, the first draft had avoided any attempt to “condemn” the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in order not to alienate any possible supporters. Even so, the “deploring” of the military intervention was not mild enough for a great number of countries, including many in the Western world, the Arab group (apart from Algeria and Democratic Yemen), the ASEAN countries and Japan. Horta bitterly noted that Resolution 3485 was nowhere near as strongly worded as “the countless anti-Israel motions introduced each year in the general assembly by the Arab group”.

Ahead of the UN Security Council's discussion of the “East Timor question” José Ramos Horta and David Scott of AETA arrived in New York, as did Abílio Araújo. The former two met with members of the Security Council to seek support. They found that their strongest allies were China, Tanzania and Guyana, and they met frequently with representatives from those countries. The Chinese mission treated them lavishly and warned them specifically against the Soviet “revisionists”.

On December 16, UN Ambassador Huang of China strongly condemned Indonesia at the Security Council. Indonesia was, on the other hand, strongly defended by their Timorese collaborators. Mário Carrascalão of UDT, claiming that he was in New York on behalf of

32 José Ramos Horta, op. cit., p. 106.
33 Ibid
34 Ibid, p. 108.
35 Before they left, their wives and families were placed in special custody 'for Indonesia's security', as the briefing colonel from Bakin told them. João Carrascalao was sent to the Middle East, Paolo Pires to the Netherlands, and another emissary to Japan; with the common task to convince their audiences that integration
“300,000 poor and illiterate Timorese”, stated that only one person (sic) died during the invasion of 7 December, while Guilherme Goncalves of Apodeti announced that “I come from East Timor, but at this moment I feel like a citizen of Indonesia and am extremely proud to be so.” José Martins of Kota who blamed the two Portuguese majors Jonatas and Mota for taking “measures which have strengthened the influence of Fretilin”. He also proposed a referendum in the territory (which he may, or may not, have been promised by Indonesia ahead of the signing in Atabae of the above-mentioned document in praise of the “successful action” of 7 December). Australia’s UN Ambassador expressed himself “confident that the Indonesian elements will withdraw as soon as fighting between the political parties has ceased” (notwithstanding the fact that the fighting between political parties in East Timor had ceased some four months earlier). David Scott of AETA appeared at the Security Council alongside José Ramos Horta representing Fretilin and the Government of the Republic of East Timor, the youngest diplomat ever to address the Security Council. Scott and Horta both put forth the perspective that Indonesia had committed an unlawful invasion in breach of international law. During the week-long Security Council debate, the Japanese delegation, siding with one of their country's major suppliers of oil, and also being a major investor in Indonesia “was conspicuous for its frantic activities in support of Indonesia”. Japan was far from alone in wishing for an outcome favourable to Indonesia.

While this big political game was going on in New York in far away Dili, on the 18th December 1975 Arnaldo dos Reis Araújo and Francisco Xavier Lopes da Cruz, presidents of Apodeti and UDT respectively, signed a document which stated that a Provisional Government of East Timor had been established the day before. The document asked for the Government of Indonesia to ‘render assistance in the military, social as well as economic assistance, so that a condition of peace and order in the territory of East Timor can be restored ... free from the disturbances and threats from the terrorist remnants left by the Portuguese Government’.

Back in New York, the UN Security Council adopted on 22 December Resolution 384 (1975), which recognised the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and of the Declaration of Decolonisation. The resolution also called upon 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 General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Security Council also called upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw its forces from the Territory, and asked Portugal, as the administering power, to co-operate fully with the United Nations, to enable the people of East Timor to exercise their right to self-determination. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to send a special representative to East Timor for the purpose of making an on-the-spot assessment of the existing situation, to establish contact with all the parties in the Territory and all states concerned, and to submit recommendations to the Security Council as soon as possible.

reflected the wish of the majority of the Timorese, and that Indonesia had not invaded their territory. The exercise did not work as well as the Indonesians had intended. At least two of them, Paolo Pires and João Carrascalao, tried to convey something of the real situation in the former Portuguese colony, but the Indonesians found out about their ‘perfidy’ and reacted with anger. Carrascalao was placed under house arrest at Kupang, where he was to remain until shortly before he was repatriated to Portugal in mid-1976. Pires also managed to get to Portugal (Dunn, op. cit., p. 296).

Rabbitt Roff, op. cit., p. 85.

Ibid, p. 86.

Horta, op. cit., p. 111.

Republic of Indonesia, op. cit., pp. 382-383.

The UN attempts to assess the situation on the ground.

In accordance with the Security Council resolution, the Secretary-General appointed Vittorio Winspeare Gucciardi, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, as his special representative in the East Timor question. Gucciardi spent two days in Portuguese Timor, stopping in the enclave of Oecusse, the island of Atauro, and in Dili, Manatuto and Baucau on the island’s north coast - all Indonesian militarily-controlled areas. The Provisional Government claimed that it was impossible for him to visit Fretilin-held areas, on technical and/or security grounds. Gucciardi then contacted Fretilin representatives in Darwin, hoping to arrange travel to the Fretilin-controlled south coast of East Timor. This proved impossible, as Australian police confiscated the Darwin radio, set up by CIET. The reason given for the confiscation was that it was an illegal transmitter. Gucciardi then went to Darwin himself and made contact with Fretilin forces by using the radio of a Portuguese corvette stationed in the harbour. Fretilin named four possible air-strips where Gucciardi could land in a light plane. Indonesian forces immediately bombed all four sites. The Times, on 4 February 1976, quoted Adam Malik as saying that any ship carrying Gucciardi ‘risked being sunk if it attempted to penetrate disputed areas of East Timor.’ On 5 February, Gucciardi finally abandoned his efforts to visit Fretilin-held areas.

In a two-part article, ‘The Timor Papers’, published in the Australian weekly National Times, May 30 to June 5, 1982, and June 6 to 12, 1982, Dale Van Atta and Brian Toohey published excerpts from classified US documents, of which the core had come from radio antennae at the base run by the Australian Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) near Darwin in the Northern Territory. Most of the documents had been presented in the National Intelligence Daily, a news sheet which is published by the Director of the CIA for a cleared audience in Washington. The documents show that the USA and Australia had full knowledge of Indonesia’s plans to obstruct Gucciardi’s mission. On January 18, 1976, the National Intelligence Daily was informing its select readers that Jakarta was preparing carefully for the arrival of the UN fact-finding mission the coming week and that efforts were under way to conceal the presence of Indonesian troops and heavy equipment and to repair war damage in Dili. Gucciardi was to be allowed to visit only Dili and other towns securely under Indonesian control, and formal contact would be allowed only with the carefully coached pro-Indonesian regime in Dili.

On 17 January 1976 the National Intelligence Daily wrote that ‘according to an intercepted message, Indonesia is making an all-out effort to camouflage its military presence in Timor in preparation for the visit of the UN special envoy to the island. The cover-up, reportedly ordered by area commander General Murdani, will include; restricting Portuguese frigates from entering Timorese waters; limiting the envoy’s survey to four “cleared towns”; coaching provisional Government personnel on explicit replies to questions; and prohibiting Indonesian air force personnel from entering airports during the envoy’s visit’. On 1 February 1976, the Intelligence Daily reported that ‘the degree of importance which the Indonesians assign to

41 Ibid, p. 61.
42 The elections in Australia following the sacking of Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister had resulted in a Liberal Party-Country Party government. Whitlam was out, but his government’s policy on Indonesia, which had been continued by the interim caretaker government, was not changed. The new Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock met with his Indonesian counterpart Adam Malik in Jakarta on 19-20 January 1976. Peacock reportedly stressed that Australia was not prepared to jeopardise its good relations with Indonesia because of East Timor, while Malik assured him that an act of self-determination would be carried out in East Timor (Paul Dominic Twomey, Australia, the United States, and the East Timor Controversy. Unpublished M. A. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, The Graduate School, Department of Political Science, 1984, p. 46). The confiscation of the radio transmitter was in accordance with the spirit of this meeting.
43 Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 39.
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blocking Gucciardi’s visit to Timor is manifested by their plan to sink the Portuguese frigate with the envoy on board. Having rejected this option due to its ramifications, they are still considering whether to; sink the vessel before it reached Darwin; request the Australians to deny permission for Gucciardi to visit Darwin; or failing that, ask the Australians to refuse the Portuguese ship entry into Darwin.44

Gucciardi stated in his report that any accurate assessment of the situation in East Timor remained elusive and that there were divergent views regarding the implementation of the Security Council resolution. He believed that there was a ‘slender common assumption’ that the people of East Timor should be consulted on their future, but that the element of consultation was very differently interpreted. Fretilin had suggested a referendum on the basis of one man one vote, with a choice between integration with Indonesia and independence under Fretilin. The Portuguese Government favoured a referendum along the lines of the Portuguese Law which had been promulgated after the Macau meeting, and suggested that the alternatives in the referendum would be integration with Indonesia or independence after consultation with all political forces in East Timor. The Provisional Government of East Timor stated flatly that the people had already exercised their right of self-determination and considered East Timor an integral part of Indonesia. However, ‘in deference to the wishes of the United Nations’ the first task of a Provisional People’s Representative Council, when it met, would be to ratify the decision of the people for complete integration with Indonesia or to formulate any other form of the political future in East Timor. The Indonesian government told Gucciardi that it was for the people of East Timor to decide their future political status. At the same time it welcomed the proclamation of integration by the Provisional Government, which it claimed represented the majority of the people of East Timor, but believed that a formal decision should be ratified by the people of East Timor.

Gucciardi’s report resulted in Security Council resolution 389 (1976), which again reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, and again called upon all states to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor. It once more called upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw without further delay all its forces from the Territory. It also requested the Secretary-General to have his special representative continue the assignment entrusted to him by the Security Council. The resolution was approved by twelve votes to none with two abstentions (Japan and the United States).45

Testifying at this April 1976 session at the UN Security Council was Australian Labor Party MP Ken Fry, who had visited East Timor as member of two Australian delegations in 1975. He had become the leading supporter of East Timor in the national parliament, and presented a view, in a statement co-written by Helen Hill, which differed greatly from his country’s official and Indonesian-supportive stance.46 While in New York, he also lobbied other countries’ missions to the UN, while Australia’s permanent mission to the UN was lobbying openly in support of Indonesia’s claims to East Timor. Ken Fry’s presence at the UN was paid for by ACFOA, one more early example of the contributions that civil society groups made towards the ‘East Timor question’ through the years.

The Indonesian reaction to Security Council resolution 389 (1976) was a statement by the Indonesian UN representative that the Indonesian volunteers would be withdrawn only at the request of the Provisional Government. Indonesia could therefore not accept the request for the withdrawal of its forces from East Timor.47

The Japanese delegate was of the opinion that the resolution was redundant, as withdrawal was already under way, ordered by the Provisional Government in Dili.\(^{48}\)

During this session of the Security Council José Martins of Kota publicly denounced, on 29 April 1976, the Balibó Declaration as a farce and also stated that when he, on 16 December 1975, had addressed the Security Council, defending the integration into Indonesia, he had done so on orders from the Indonesian representative to the UN. He said that he had then come as a member of a three man delegation, the others being Guilherme Gonçalves and Mário Carrascalão. José Martins now said (abridged):

> I came in December not as a free man. I was forced ... to read what the Indonesians had written. Now I am a free man ... The very moment we entered Indonesian territory in the first week of September 1975, fleeing from advancing Fretiilin forces, we became instruments of the Indonesian government. The dismembered leadership of Apodeti, UDT, Kota and Trabalhista soon realised that while looking for “freedom” we fell into the hands of the Indonesian military.\(^{49}\)

José Martins also announced in New York the withdrawal of Kota from the Provisional Government. He also stated that the five journalists who died in Balibó in October 1975 had been killed by Indonesian troops, two by accident and the other three deliberately murdered. Martins himself had arrived in Balibó not later than three hours after the killings, he said.\(^{50}\)

This revelation provoked public outrage in Australia. Soon after Canberra Times journalist Bruce Juddery revealed that the then Foreign Minister of Australia, Senator Willessee, in a statement made on October 30, 1975, withheld the fact that Australia knew about Indonesian military activity in East Timor at the time. Willessee thereby acted, or rather refrained from acting, on advice from Richard Woolcott, Ambassador to Jakarta.\(^{51}\) The combination of José Martins revelations and this final evidence of Australian government collusion in the Indonesian invasion of East Timor made it impossible for the Australian Government to partake in the final act of Indonesia’s takeover of former Portuguese Timor.

**Indonesia's rule is formalised**

The Provisional Government invited the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to attend the first meeting of a Regional Popular Assembly in Dili on 31 May 1976, where an Act of Free Choice was to be conducted. The invitations were turned down. The Chairman of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation issued a statement on 28 May, saying that in view of the fact that the Special Committee had in no way been involved in the proceedings leading up to the announced meeting of the Regional Popular Assembly, it would not be in a position to dispatch a delegation to Dili.\(^{52}\)

The meeting, held in the Dili sports hall, was over in less than two hours. Seven foreign diplomats – out of twenty-three invited - from India, Iran, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand were present.


\(^{49}\) IWGIA, op. cit., pp. 45-47.


\(^{51}\) Rabbitt Roff, op. cit., p. 120.

At the very last moment the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Peacock, instructed the Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr. R. Woolcott, not to send a representative to Dili.\textsuperscript{53}

The Regional Popular Assembly unanimously - with a membership number varying between 28 to 37 according to different sources - adopted a resolution requesting integration with Indonesia.\textsuperscript{54} The twenty representatives from the press were not given any opportunity to meet the representatives and were only able to stay in Dili for three hours.\textsuperscript{55} A journalist from the Indonesian magazine \textit{Tempo} wrote:

> Journalists were not permitted to leave the sports hall. As soon as they moved to descend the stairs, they were admonished by an official in civilian clothing. It was the same when they tried to question members of the committee who were gathered outside the meeting place. The same official politely requested that they go back into the sports hall.\textsuperscript{56}

The ‘Act of Free Choice’ by the East Timor Regional Popular Assembly, and the subsequent petition to President Suharto, requesting integration with the Republic of Indonesia, did pay at least lip service to the spirit of UN principles regarding integration into sovereign states. Roger Clark, however, points out that the Regional Popular Assembly fell far short of satisfying the standards of the conditions for a legitimate and genuine expression of will to integrate with a sovereign state as set forth by the United Nations General Assembly in Principle IX of Resolution 1541(XV).

> The conditions for a legitimate and genuine expression of will to integrate with a sovereign state according to Principle IX of Resolution 1541 (XV) – are that: (a) The integrating territory should have attained an advanced stage of self-government with free political institutions, so that its peoples would have the capacity to make a responsible choice through informed and democratic processes, and (b) The integration should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the territory's peoples acting with full knowledge of the change in their status, their wishes having been expressed through informed and democratic processes impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage. The United Nations could, when it deems necessary, supervise these processes.\textsuperscript{57}

Clark also points out that the foreign observers that were present were diplomats from states arguably sympathetic to Indonesia, and in any event neither the diplomats nor the attending journalists were permitted to interview members of the Assembly. The speeches were made in Portuguese, and were not translated, so most of the diplomats and journalists were unable to understand them. Also, the seven foreign diplomats did not produce reports of the proceedings, which is in sharp contrast with the practice of United Nations observers. Roger Clark writes that it is difficult to come to a conclusion other than that the diplomats fulfilled only a cosmetic role by their presence.\textsuperscript{58}

The stage-show proceeded with the sending of a delegation to convey the petition of integration to President Suharto in Jakarta. A 52-member delegation arrived there on June 6 and, apart from the formal business of asking the Indonesian Government to take over Portuguese Timor, also visited and lay wreaths on the graves of six generals killed during the

\textsuperscript{53} Rabbitt Roff, op. cit., p. 120.
\textsuperscript{55} Rabbit Roff, op. cit., p. 127.
\textsuperscript{57} Clark, op. cit., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, p. 16.
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1966 abortive coup.⁵⁹ Suharto, in his turn, dispatched a mission headed by the Minister of Home Affairs to find out whether the formal request for integration was in fact the wish of the Timorese people. Again, the UN was invited to take part, but the Chairman of the Special Committee declared that the Special Committee was not in a position to respond to the invitation for the same reasons as the earlier invitation had been turned down.⁶⁰

Not unexpectedly, the Indonesian mission gave a favourable report of its visit to Timor, and with Indonesian Statutory Law No. 7 of 17 July 1976, the Indonesian government pronounced East Timor to be Indonesia’s twenty-seventh province.⁶¹ A helpless UN could only establish the illegality of the situation. This helplessness can not only be blamed on politics emanating from Jakarta; to a high degree it was generated within the UN system itself. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, representative of the USA to the United Nations at the time, wrote in his book *A Dangerous Place* (Moynihan and Weaver 1978) that

China altogether backed Fretilin in Timor, and lost. In Spanish Sahara, Russia just as completely backed … Polisario, and lost. In both instances the United States wished things to turn out as they did, and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations proved utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success.⁶²

Still, the UN’s refusal to put its stamp of approval on the ‘Act of free choice’ meant that the East Timorese resistance – unlike their West Papuan counterpart - could base their arguments on UN resolutions which reaffirmed ‘the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination’. If the United Nations had not stood firm on this issue, the incorporation of East Timor would have proceeded in the same shameful way as did in West Papua/Irian Jaya, which left the resistance there without any state-level support in their struggle for independence. In the end, this proved to be of vital importance, as we will see in later chapters of this book.

From that moment onwards, developments in East Timor, or *Timor Timur* as it was now called (Timur being the word for “east” in Bahasa), were considered to be an internal matter by the Indonesian government. UDT representatives in Lisbon responded with a statement published in *Diario de Noticias*, 27 July 1976: ‘The leaders of our party in Dili are prisoners in the technical sense. Their actions are therefore null and void.’⁶³ By then, their party did not even exist in Timor, as since January 1976 all Timorese political parties had been disbanded. As in Indonesia at large, only three parties were now permitted – the ‘Moslem’ PPP, the ‘nationalist’ and ‘Christian’ PDI and the army’s party Golkar; parties totally alien to the East Timorese.

Many Timorese, suspected of supporting Fretilin, were in December 1975 arrested and detained without charges or trial in a number of improvised places of detention in Dili. The Portuguese District Prison, Cadeia Comarca, came under the supervision of the military police in early 1976 and was renamed *Lembaga Pemasyrakatan Dili*, (Dili Socialisation Institute). Many prisoners were then moved to this bleak and violent place, from which many prisoners

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⁵⁹ *The Age*, Melbourne, 7/6 1976.
⁶¹ Just as Timor was already included in the national epics of both Indonesia and Portugal, *Nagarakrtagama* and *Os Lusíadas*, it now became included in the laws of both countries. In April 1976 a new Portuguese constitution went into effect, and its Article 307 states that ‘Portugal is bound by its obligations, in accordance with international law, to promote and guarantee the right to independence of East Timor’ (United Nations, Document A/36/448-S/14640. Session of the Permanent People’s Tribunal on East Timor, Lisbon, 19-21 June 1981.)
⁶³ Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 44.
simply 'disappeared', many of them tortured and then disposed of at the Areaia Branca beach outside of Dili. More of this later.

The Indonesian Government Regulation No. 19, issued on 17 July 1976, stated that the new province should have its capital in Dili and that it should be divided into kabupaten, districts, kecamatan, sub-districts, and desa, villages. The executive officers were restyled gubernur (Governor), bupati (district-head), camat (sub district-head), and lurah (village-head) respectively. The administrative structure was accompanied at every level by a military command structure identical with that which existed throughout Indonesia. Each district got its matching Kodim (Komando Distrik Militer), and the villages were put under surveillance of a Babinsa, (Bintara Pembina Desa), village guidance officer. The babinsas in their turn were linked to the Intel, the military intelligence operatives, with agents in all the main centres of East Timor. Intel, or Satuan Tugas/Badan Pelaksanaan Intelijen (Intelligence Task Force/Implementing Body) its formal name, were to play a dominant role in internal repression during the period of Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Most of the Babinsas were East Timorese, though some were from West Timor. The babinsas were regarded as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the forces, collecting intelligence on a regular basis. However, this was a weak link since many East Timorese babinsas shared the sentiments of the villagers they supervised.

Thus, on every level of administration a military presence was established, according to the concept of dwi-fungsi (cf. chapter 8). For people living under Indonesian control life was drastically changed. Nearly all the routines of daily life were destroyed. People were placed under strict military surveillance and were often not able to attend to their gardens situated outside the villages, which soon led to shortages of food. People had to list the names of persons living in each house, and every afternoon the lists were checked. Those who were not at home were accused of being Fretilin members or supporters and were consequently interrogated, tortured or even executed. Violations against Timorese women and girls occurred regularly. The new situation also led to a change in the traditional roles of men and women; as women now sometimes had to do things their men were not allowed out to do. Wherever possible the population tried to escape the Indonesian-held areas to locations behind Fretilin lines where, for the first year or so after the invasion, life was relatively peaceful and stable.

On 14 August 1976, the Indonesian Ministry of Defence and Security in effect made its operation in East Timor into a domestic operation by establishing the Komando Daerah Pertahanan dan Keamanan Timor Timur, Kodahankam Timor Timur (East Timor Regional Defence and Security Command). In that year, two partly Timorese battalions, Battalions 744 and 745, based in Dili and Baucau respectively, were set up by the Indonesian military. The first such troop to be established, Battalion 744, was formed around João Tavares’ Halilintar group. For services rendered to the Indonesians, Tavares was later appointed bupati (district-head) of Bobonaro. From this position he eventually managed to become one of the largest landowners in the territory, and a political and military power to be reckoned with. He will return later in this story, as one of the key actors in the bloody aftermath to the referendum in 1999.

Apart from these two battalions, any East Timorese could expect to be called in to fight the enemy, i.e. Fretilin/Falintil, at a moments notice. They were grouped into one of two official

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65 CAVR, 2005, op. cit., p. 11.
67 CAVR, 2005, op. cit., p. 78.
68 Dunn 2001:10

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bodies, Ratih (*Rakyat Terlatih*, Trained Populace) and Hansip (*Pertahanan Sipil*, civilian defence). Ratih and Hansip were para-military, hamlet-based organisations of local watchmen patrolling the neighbourhoods. Of these two groups, Ratih was the less formally organised, its members receiving only rudimentary military training, while Hansip received more intensive training and, apart from the watchman duties, were also regularly used in combat situations. The difference in hierarchy between the two groups meant that promising (from an Indonesian perspective) Ratih members were often recruited into Hansip. From among the members of Hansip, a number of East Timorese were then recruited to the regular Indonesian army, ABRI. The first East Timorese Hansip units were established during the second half of 1976, and by mid-1978 there were 5,897 Hansip members in East Timor. By 1982 this number had risen to about 6700, while Ratih membership was considerably higher, an estimated 31,000 in that same year. In this way the Indonesian military authorities tried to set up young Timorese against their own people. However, the inferior way in which these young Timorese men were treated by the Javanese troops, as well as the indiscriminate killings, made many of them desert to the Fretilin forces.

The Indonesian military also recruited several thousand children as TBOs (*Tenaga Bantuan Operasi*, operations assistants). Their role was to function as porters and errand boys to Indonesian soldiers, and they were also forced to take part in their operations. In the 'line of duty' they witnessed rapes and executions, and some were kept as virtual slaves and treated cruelly by their masters.

Through the measures described above, which had been preceded by the use of the groups led by Tomás Goncalves and João Tavares pre 7 December 1975, the Indonesian army exported and firmly established a bureaucratic and systematic use of paramilitary forces already in use in Indonesia which had shown terrifying efficiency in 1965. This system of violence by proxy was to be further expanded in the 1980’s; more of that later.

For all practical purposes, effective power in the territory was wielded by two men, the Military Commander in charge of military operations, and the Sekwilda (*Sekretaris Wilayah Daerah*, Regional Area Secretary), in charge of local government. Immediately following the invasion the most powerful man in all matters of administration was Brigadier-General Dading Kabualdi, who had been a main figure in Operasi Komodo. The first Sekwilda was a Colonel Sinaga.

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69 Ibid, p. 23.
70 Geoffrey Robinson, ‘People’s war: militias in East Timor and Indonesia’, *South East Asia Research*, Vol. 9, No. 3. London: The University, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South East Asia, p. 298.
71 Taudevin, op. cit., p. 81.
74 CAVR, 2005, op. cit., p. 125. See also Robinson, op. cit., p. 57. Some of those boys were later to become leading militias during the pro-integration struggle in the late 1990s, Eurico Guterres being the most well-known example. Joanico Cesario was also a former TBO who became the overall leader of a number of militia groups in 1999. Alfredo Reinado, ill-famed among other things, for a 2008 abortive assassination attempt on José Ramos Horta – where Reinado himself was killed - was another. Eurico Guterres and Joanico Cesario will be discussed later, Reinado is beyond the scope of this book.
PART 3. OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

The resistance is organised

By the end of 1975 more than 20,000 Indonesian troops were stationed in the small territory, supported by aircraft and naval units. In spite of this, they made very slow progress. Ainaro was taken on 21 February, Lospalos shortly thereafter, while Aileu and Ermere, the center of the coffee industry, was lost to the Indonesians in early April 1976.\(^75\) After four months of heavy fighting, at a terrible cost of Timorese lives, the Indonesian forces had only gained control of major towns and administrative centres. Eight months after the invasion, a number of corridors between these centres had been added to the areas under Indonesian control, but Fretilin forces moved freely throughout most of the country.

It seems that Lopes da Cruz, UDT’s president and leading supporter of Operasi Komodo and Timor’s subsequent integration with Indonesia, soon got cold feet upon realising the extent of the killings. A news report emanated from Jakarta stating that sixty thousand East Timorese had been killed by mid-February 1976. The figure was contained in a statement made on 13 February 1976 by da Cruz, who was at the time vice-chairman of the ‘Provisional Government of East Timor’ (cited in *New York Times*, 15 February 1976, *The Age*, Melbourne 14 February 1976). Attempts were made by Indonesian officials to undermine da Cruz’s statement by claiming that he had really been referring to ‘victims’ in the broader sense, including refugees and wounded people, or to the killings that had taken place prior to the Indonesian invasion.\(^76\)

Many of Fretilin’s fifty-two Central Committee members had escaped to the hills south of Dili before the Indonesian invasion, thus avoiding being killed or captured at an early stage of the invasion, leaving Fretilin with a fully functioning leadership.\(^77\) Stocks of food, ammunition and arms had been placed in hideouts in the interior of the territory. In comparison with the Indonesian troops, Fretilin and its military wing, Falintil, had some important advantages. They could rely on widespread popular support, and they had intimate knowledge of the country’s mountainous and inaccessible interior. The lack of an infrastructure suitable for motorised transport also favoured the lightly-equipped Falintil forces.

The rural population knew well how to overcome periods of food shortages by making use of spontaneous-growing food crops, as they normally did during peaceful times. Food production was therefore relatively flexible, and Fretilin was able to feed an increasingly larger population, as people fled the Indonesia-controlled areas. Half a year after the invasion the pattern of Timorese resistance began to change from armed confrontation to guerrilla warfare. Falintil commanders had concluded that to continue frontal combats against the numerically superior (35,000 by April 1976) and better equipped Indonesian army units was suicidal. Falintil fighters were instead distributed into as many fronts as the Indonesian army had. Many times, only two or three guerrillas confronted 30 Indonesian soldiers, sometimes 20 or 30 Falintil soldiers held a whole company of Indonesian soldiers at bay.\(^78\) The decision for this change in strategies was taken at a Fretilin conference held in Soibada from 20 May to 2 June 1976. Fretilin’s main tactic was to ambush troop movements and to carry out surprise attacks on Indonesian-occupied towns. It was decided that although the political organisation should be tightened, the conduct of war was to be the main priority. Considerable attention

\(^75\) Dunn, op. cit., pp. 292-293.
\(^76\) Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 42.
was given to the maximising and rationalisation of food production to feed the growing population in the Fretilin-held areas.\textsuperscript{79}

Fretilin divided the territory into six sectors, each of which was divided into smaller political and military units. Communication between the sectors was facilitated when Alexandre Lemos, (UDT prisoner), in March/April 1976 set up an aerial which increased the power of Fretilin’s radio transmissions and also made a telephone line between sectors.\textsuperscript{80}

Militarily the sectors were supervised by a sector commander responsible for the Forças do Setor, sector forces. Falintil troops were further divided into Forças de Intervenção, intervention forces, and small units of Brigadas de Choques or Brichoques, shock brigades. The latter were chosen from among those considered to be the élite soldiers in Falintil, many of whom had served in the Portuguese army. Stationed at Fada Bloko, this force of about one hundred soldiers were always at the ready to be deployed when other troops needed assistance.\textsuperscript{81}

A Comissário Político, political commissioner, was in charge of the political and social organisation in the Bases Vermelhas or Bases de Apoio, support bases within the Fretilin-controlled areas. Each region had its own regional secretary and regional commander. The regional secretary was responsible for the organisation of food production, housing, education, health-care and political courses. For the latter purpose, a Ceforpol (Centro da Formação Política, Centre for Political Training) was established in every region. The various Ceforpolos were supervised by a department of Fretilin’s Central Committee, DOPI (Departamento da Orientação Política e Ideológica, Department of Political and Ideological Orientation.) The political training was carried out through esclarecimento (enlightenment) programs, in combination with cultural activities where local songs (with new lyrics) and dances were used to explain Timor’s history of colonialism and oppression. The idea was to install nationalist feelings among the various ethno-linguistic groups, and to encourage the population at large to support the struggle for independence. Fretilin also criticized and challenged local oppressive traditions, such as the power of liurais to extoll mandatory tributes and forced labour, and the inequality between men and women.\textsuperscript{82}

During this period, and indeed during the whole period of occupation, women bore arms alongside men, provided logistical support, and carried out a broad range of clandestine political and armed resistance activities. They also took primary responsibility for their communities and families. Although women were consulted in the decision-making process, decisions were taken by the men. The three women in the central committee of Fretilin had junior positions only.\textsuperscript{83}

No sooner was it (OPMT, cf. chapter 9, G.J.) founded than the women’s movement had to go underground with the rest of the resistance to the Indonesian occupation. For the next 24 years it had to subordinate its agenda to FRETILIN’s national liberation struggle.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{79} Lawson, op. cit., pp. 47-53.
\textsuperscript{81} Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., p. 52.
\textsuperscript{82} Kiernan, op. cit., p. 140.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, p. 3.
Although decisions taken at the Soibada conference, such as the one that any compromise solution was rejected, were supported by the majority of the leadership; however for some of the leaders the prospect of a long-term war combined with political attempts to overthrow colonial and feudal traditional relationships were unacceptable. As will be seen later, these differences culminated in divisions within the Fretilin leadership when the military pressure increased.

**Outside strategies – or lack thereof: Australia, the United States and Portugal**

If anybody had hoped for help from outside forces, these expectations were quelled, when in September 1976 the Indonesian government closed the waters around East Timor and announced that those who attempted to break this blockade would be fired upon. That any official support from their southern neighbour could not be counted upon had already been made quite clear. The new Australian government declared its intention to continue the Whitlam administrations’ policy on East Timor and this was reaffirmed when Prime Minister Fraser and Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock visited Jakarta from 7 to 11 October 1976. They promised their Indonesian hosts that Australia would not restate its policy, either domestically or at the United Nations. They also promised that Fretilin radios would not be allowed to operate from Australian territory.

With Fraser and Peacock in Jakarta was also J. B. Reid, Director of BHP, the largest company in Australia, which through its control of the Woodside Burmah Company, had a considerable interest in drillings off shore East Timor. Oil interests in Australia had lobbied strongly during 1975 in support of recognition of the Indonesian take-over of Timor, as they wanted a quick agreement on an Indonesian-Australian maritime boundary. J. B. Reid was also the former President of Australia-Indonesia Business Co-operation Committee (AIBCC) which represented 153 Australian companies. AIBCC argued that immediate recognition of Indonesia’s incorporation of East Timor was desirable in the interest of regional security and that tension over Timor would damage Australia’s interests.

At the end of 1976 the Australian government also limited the activities of Fretilin in Australia. Rogério Lobato was refused an entry visa for Australia after visits abroad, and Chris Santos, Fretilin’s exiled Information Officer, who had also been one of the operators of the Darwin radio transmitter, was refused permanent residency status in Australia. The one remaining direct source of information from East Timor to Australia was cut off when, on 16 November 1976, Telecom (the Australian state telephone company) was ordered not to pass on messages from East Timor that were received by the Northern Territory’s Outpost Radio system. David Scott has noted that Australia's policy on East Timor was based on six assumptions, all later to be proven wrong:

- Resistance would be overcome quickly by the Indonesian army, with few casualties.
- The Indonesian army would behave with respect for the East Timorese people who would recognise resistance was hopeless and that it was in their interests to become citizens of Indonesia.
- The third assumption was that the international community would soon forget about the whole thing, and East Timor would, perhaps within a year, be dropped from the UN agenda.

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85 Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 45.
87 Ibid, p. 57.
88 Ibid, p. 63.
PART 3. OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

- Indonesian occupation would facilitate Australian access to oil and gas deposits under the waters between Australia and Timor.
- Indonesia would respect Whitlam's demand to Suharto that the people of East Timor should be allowed an act of self-determination (in which they were supposed to choose the Indonesian alternative).
- Support for integration would improve Indonesian-Australian relations.  

It is my assumption that a great number of countries shared all or some of these thoughts – if they considered the issue at all. In dealing with the 'East Timor question' in such a way as to promote the official interests of Australia and Indonesia at the cost of the population of East Timor, the Australian government, however, found that its actions were deeply unpopular with large segments of its own population. The solidarity movement, present in all major towns and cities, split into two different approaches. As different as these approaches were, neither of them shared the above assumptions of the Australian government. In the first category were all the groups that campaigned in support of Fretilin and independence. These groups accepted the fact that Timor-Leste already fulfilled all the criteria of independence on 28 November 1975 and accepted the political agenda of Fretilin. The other category took an approach much more based on human rights and didn't become specifically Fretilin support groups. Australia's proximity to Timor, together with a historical memory of the sacrifice paid by the East Timorese protecting Australian soldiers during the small Sparrow Force' heroic guerilla struggle against the Japanese military in World War II, plus a growing refugee community were important factors behind the growth of this Timor solidarity movement.

So, if official Australia was decidedly less than helpful, Australian civil society was an altogether different matter. The establishing of radio contact between Timor and Australia has already been described, but there were also attempts to deliver much needed aid to Fretilin-controlled areas of East Timor. On Christmas Day 1975, a number of Australian welfare organisations made an offer to Indonesian authorities of delivering relief supplies requesting that safe passage be guaranteed; an offer which was ignored. Then, on January 11, 1976, Prime Minister Andrew Peacock of the caretaker government refused to give permission for a barge to leave Darwin with supplies, which were steadily growing. By mid-1976 the Community Aid Abroad alone had raised 160,000A$ worth of food and other supplies.

This was the background to the attempt in September 1976 by four individual Australians to try to break through the naval blockade and deliver the supplies to some Fretilin-controlled port in East Timor. One of them, Cliff Morris, was a former member of the Australian commando force which had fought in Timor during WWII; he was now a dairy farmer in his mid-50s. Robert Wesley Smith was a left-wing activist, while James Zantis was a right-wing political activist, who was associated with ASIAT (the Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid), which had had an established presence in Timor during the brief Fretilin interregnum in 1975. Zantis was the man who had sold the first – and only – export from the Democratic Republic of East Timor, the coffee load on the Alanna Fay, to a firm in Sydney. He was also suspected by some of having ties with ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Organisation). Manolis Mavromatis was a fisherman with no apparent political leanings, but was of the opinion that the Timorese ought to be helped by those who were in a position to do so. Since he was an adventurer and owner of a boat, he reckoned he was one of those. Taken together, this group illustrates well the width of support to East Timor in Australia, even though the

90 Magalhães & Liong, op. cit., p. 10.
more strictly ‘left-leaning’ groups (i.e. CIET) were the first to be organized on a more formal level.

Manolis Mavromatis’ fishing boat, Dawn, was loaded with supplies of medicine, some food, radio equipment and six firearms. On the night of 17 September 1976 they tried to slip out of Darwin’s harbour unseen, but were almost immediately apprehended by a navy patrol boat, and escorted back. Locked up in prison they were told that they would not be charged with any offences, but only kept in custody while the Dawn was being searched. The guns that were found were seen by customs as normal weapons on a North Australian fishing boat, operating in crocodile and shark infested waters.

Things changed, however, when during the interrogation of the four men, one of the customs officers was called away to answer an urgent telephone call from Canberra. When the officer came back, he revealed that it had been Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who had insisted that the Dawn group be charged with gun-running. They were also later, in February 1977, convicted by the Darwin magistrate of an “attempt to unlawfully export drugs, medicinal and pharmaceutical goods” and “to unlawfully export firearms.” The defense lawyers immediately announced an appeal to the Supreme Court, an appeal which was upheld in late April 1977.92

The Melbourne Age, on 19 November 1976, and again on 8 December, reported on a highly confidential report handed to the Australian government which claimed that at least sixty thousand, and perhaps as many as one hundred thousand Timorese had been killed since Indonesian forces invaded East Timor. This caused a stir among the Australian public, and not only among active supporters of East Timor. The report came from Indonesian church officials, who had received their information from East Timorese Catholic sources. The report also confirmed earlier claims made by Fretilin in radio broadcasts that their forces controlled around eighty-five percent of the territory of East Timor, and would win any genuine referendum.93

The church report led James Dunn, former Australian Consul in Dili, and Australian Labour Party MP Gordon Bryant, to visit Portugal in January 1977 to interview East Timorese refugees who had been repatriated from refugee camps in West Timor. As a result of the interviews Dunn presented, on 11 February 1977, a dossier to the Australian government which stated that the situation in East Timor ‘might well constitute, relatively speaking, the most serious contravention of human rights facing the world at this time.’94

Six members of the Australian Labour Party, led by Tom Uren, who had served in West Timor during WWII, subsequently contacted Congressman Donald Fraser of the US House of Representatives International Relations Committee. Fraser was then chairperson of the House Sub-Committee on International Organisations, a panel concerned with human rights in relation to US foreign policy. The letter led to an invitation to testify before a joint congressional hearing on 23 March 1977. At this hearing Dunn presented the dossier which was based on his interviews with East Timorese refugees in Lisbon. Although admitting that the US government had not attempted to interview any East Timorese who had witnessed atrocities, a State Department spokesperson responded by claiming that reports of Indonesian atrocities in East Timor had been ‘greatly exaggerated’, and that ‘there is no useful purpose’ in questioning Indonesia’s claim to East Timor.95

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93 Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 46.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid, p. 47.
PART 3. OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

The few US East Timor activists had hoped that Jimmy Carter, President since January 1977, and an outspoken defender of human rights, would reverse US policy on East Timor. Their hope was in vain. David T. Kenney, Country Officer for Indonesia, at the Department of State, when questioned whether the East Timorese were relatively happy with the fact that they were now under Indonesia, responded that they were so, “given the circumstances and alternatives available to them … continuing the war on one hand or possibly Indonesian administration on the other … they have decided that their best interest lies at this time in incorporation with Indonesia.” 96 Robert Oakley, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, admitted knowledge that Indonesian paratroopers had been involved in the attack on Dili, and that US origin aircraft had been used during the operation, and that the paratroopers had been equipped with US arms. 97 Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, spoke of ‘allegations’ of widespread atrocities, and that Indonesia had incorporated East Timor through a ‘referendum’. 98

While the official representatives of the United States were quite frank about the invasion, and US support of it, the two East Timorese who made statements on behalf of the regional government of Timur Timor were less so. Mário Carrascalão and José Goncalves both denied an Indonesian invasion. In Carrascalão’s words, “I did not see it, and no one told me about an airborne invasion of Dili.” 99 (Carrascalão had been in New York in December “to attend meetings of the United Nation in regard to matters pertaining to East Timor”). Asked whether “the people who were there” on December of 1975 were regular Indonesian soldiers, Carrascalão simply stated that they were not. José Goncalves, who had been in Dili at the time, stated more vaguely that

as to the specific question of about whether an invasion had taken place, I am not a specialist in military affairs but I remember on the 7th, on the morning of the 7th, I was awakened by the sound of – I am not sure if they were bombs or mortar shells landing and these are the sounds we heard for the rest of the day. On the 8th I left the house with the rest of my family. We moved to the port area where we saw people with weapons. As I say, I am not a military specialist so I was not able to ascertain what kind of weapons or what manufacture they were. At any rate, we saw many people there, some who belonged to the Apodeti, some UDT, and other people we knew and we assumed that these might be volunteers who were lending their assistance to the joint task force or joint forces … On the day that I went down there they may have been Indonesians, I didn’t speak their language but they may have been Indonesians, some of the people that I saw … if there was … an airborne invasion there had to be planes and there were no planes in the area that I could see or hear. 100

The Hearing led Subcommittee Chairman Fraser to submit a number of questions to the Department of State regarding US military aid to Indonesia. On 6 May 1977, the Department of State answered the questions in a letter to Fraser. Below is an abridged excerpt of this letter:

Following the Indonesian intervention on December 7, 1975, the Administration initiated a policy review in connection with our military assistance programme to Indonesia. … While we reviewed the situation, the Administration took action to withhold provision of additional security.

97 Ibid, p. 12.
99 Ibid, p. 52.
100 Ibid.
assistance to Indonesia, although military equipment already in the pipeline continued to be delivered. The fact of this policy review was not discussed with Indonesian authorities ... The policy review was completed in late May 1976 and funds for continuation of training courses approved prior to the policy review were obligated in June 1976. Military assistance and military sales were resumed in July 1976.101

Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Adam Malik had by then made the classic statement – hardly helpful to his allies abroad, such as the US - quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald on 5 April 1977 - that ‘50,000 or 80,000 people might have been killed during the war in East Timor ... It was war ... Then what is the big fuss?’102

As for Portugal, the country's interest in its former colony more or less disappeared after 3 October 1976, when 923 of the UDT-led entourage that crossed the border into Indonesian Timor in September 1975 were repatriated to Portugal; among them 23 Portuguese soldiers who had been prisoners of UDT.103 This very low Portuguese (official) interest in East Timor was, except for a period in the early 1980’s, to last until the mid-1980s.104 In James Dunn's words:

The new generation of leaders in Lisbon seemed bent on turning their backs on the inglorious past, and there was no enthusiasm for the prospect, however remote its likelihood, of their returning to distant East Timor to resume a decolonization role. Therefore, after the invasion Portuguese Government actions created the distinct impression that the new leadership intended to confine itself to a series of formal protests, meanwhile hoping that the problem would somehow resolve itself and go away.105

The matter was complicated further by divisions among the Timorese groups in Portugal – the defeated UDT and their defeaters, Fretilin - and the fact that China was a strong supporter of Fretilin at the UN, while the Portuguese Communist Party had extremely strong ties to Moscow.106 Taken together, this meant that the Timorese themselves had great difficulties in undertaking concerted action as well as in forming ties and alliances with the Portuguese society at large.107 I have already mentioned the political chaos in Portugal during the period of Operasi Komodo, and the great number of retournados arriving from the former African colonies. Both the influx from Africa and the political turmoil – Portugal had two presidents and eight governments in the period 1976-1982 - continued after the Indonesian takeover, making the East Timor question as marginal politically as it was geographically.

The Soviet Union’s less than supportive attitude towards East Timor – which in its turn was mirrored by the Communist Party of Portugal - was not only based on anti-Chinese sentiments. After a decade of strained relations, following the abortive coup in Indonesia in

101 United States of America, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
102 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 49.
104 Taylor, op. cit., p. 173.
105 Dunn, op. cit., pp. 369-370.
106 While China offered some financial support to cover travel and accommodation expenses for the exiled East Timorese during this early period, and invited some of them to Beijing, none of them were invited to visit Moscow or any other Communist country in Eastern Europe (Dunn, op. cit., p. 362, see also Horta, op. cit., p. 156). However, China’s support also weakened, and its position turned into one of a more neutral stance during the 1980s due to gradually improving relations with Indonesia and a growing suspicion that East Timor was a lost cause (Ian Storey, 'China and East Timor: Good, But Not Best Friends’, *China Brief*, Volume: 6 Issue: 14, May 2, 2007. Washington D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, AFAR, Association for Asian Research.) Accessed at [http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/2920.html](http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/2920.html)
107 Dunn, op. cit., pp. 369-370.
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1965, which resulted in the massacre of hundreds of thousands of real or imagined communists, Indonesia and the Soviet Union had slowly embarked on a pragmatic course of co-operation. In late May 1976 the Indonesian Government announced its acceptance of a Soviet offer for technical aid and a loan of between $300 million and $360 million. The assistance was for mining and processing of bauxite on Bintan Island in Indonesia’s Rhio Archipelago. Though wary of the Soviet Union’s patronage of exiled leaders of the outlawed Communist Party of Indonesia, the Indonesian Government apparently saw these deals as offering substantial economic and political benefits especially since diplomatic relations with the other Communist giant, China, remained frozen, with normalization unlikely to occur in the near future.108

Not just the worldly powers turned their backs on East Timor. Indonesia was strategically significant to the Vatican on a level that East Timor could not match. Being the largest Moslem nation in the world, and with a strain of Islam which was on the whole markedly more tolerant than elsewhere in the Moslem world – the Suharto government kept Moslem fundamentalist under tight control and even repression - Catholics were relatively free to evangelize in Indonesia. There were only four to five million Catholics in Indonesia, a country of some 150 million in the mid 1970’s, but some of them were extremely powerful. There were Catholics to be found on top level in ministries, as well as in military and intelligence establishments. At the same time, Catholic leaders in Indonesia were fearful of a Moslem ascendance, a fear which the Vatican was well aware of.109 Facing a choice between appeasing Jakarta and siding with the fate of a mere 27% Catholics in an obscure territory with a population that barely exceeded 650,000, the Vatican clearly favoured, as we shall soon see, the former option.

This view adopted by the Vatican could, to a great degree, be seen reflected in the attitudes of the Australian Catholic Church. The Australian Bishops exclusively acted (i.e. did not act) upon information received from the papal nuncio, the Vatican’s ambassador in Canberra. This effectively silenced moderate bishops, which in turn made it possible for B.A Santamaria and his right-wing National Civic Council (NCC) to gain a disproportionate influence on the ‘question of East Timor’, through its magazine, News Weekly and Santamaria’s regular time-slot Point of View on TV station Channel 9. Santamaria promoted not only the official Vatican view, but also those of the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) gained through his contacts with Harry Tjan and Liem Bian-Kie/Jusuf Wanandi, who had been active behind the scenes during Operasi Komodo.110

The count-down begins

Throughout 1976 and the first months of 1977 the Falintil forces had maintained a pattern of regular operations against the occupying forces, not only in the mountains, but also in areas not far from Dili and near the Indonesian border. Attacks were even launched on Indonesian army units near Dili, the Indonesian-held capital of the territory.111

111 Lawson, op. cit., p. 54.
Some months into 1977, however, Falintil had retreated to the east of the island, and centred its resistance around the Matebian mountain range where the district boundaries of Lautem, Baucau and Viqueque meet, and hundreds of thousands of people had sought shelter behind Falintil lines. Reassured that foreign intervention was a non-issue, the Indonesian government began planning for a massive attack on the Fretilin controlled parts of Timor. Part of this plan was to control the population outside of these areas. In accordance with this, many East Timorese in the Indonesian controlled areas were in September/October 1976 herded into “guarded camps”; marking the beginnings of a more systematic way of controlling the civilian population. These camps will be discussed more thoroughly later.

Other Timorese were enlisted to partake in the planned onslaught on Falintil, when in 1976 ABRI began to provide formal military training to East Timorese – apart from the earlier mentioned para-military Hansip and Ratih – when it sent 60 “partisans” to Java. In June 1977, 400 more followed. On 1 October 1977 these men graduated with the rank of private, and on 24 January 1978, the East Timor military commander, Colonel Dading Kalbuadi, formally established Infantry Battalion 744/Satya Yudha Bhakti. The new battalion of 460 troops was divided into four companies under the overall command of Major Yunus Yosfiah. In early 1978 these troops were given “raiders” training in Tasi Tolu, west of the Dili airport, and then declared ready for combat. A second group of more than 500 East Timorese recruits was trained in 1978, and were in September that year organised as Battalion 745/Sampada Yudha Bhakti, under command of Major Theo Syafei.

Internal divisions within Fretilin.

The Fretilin conference in Soibada in May/June 1976 was followed up by a conference at Lalini from March 20 to June 2, 1977. It is a measure of the control that Fretilin exerted over large areas outside the Indonesia-held towns that they were able to meet and discuss the development of the struggle for such lengths of time, and in full security. However, by the time of the Lalini meeting, internal disagreements had escalated into deep-rooted conflicts, where eventually violence within the resistance was added to the violence inflicted by the Indonesian military. James Dunn’s prediction that those (the “moderators”) who advocated talks with the Portuguese and negotiations with Indonesia would lack the force of their opponents was eerily confirmed by events at, and following, the Lalini meeting. The differences were based on widely divergent attitudes towards a number of issue; the main ones being the nature of the war, the implementation of the social and political programme of Fretilin – including the setting up of political education centres - , and the question of compromise with the enemy. Following the Indonesian occupation, many members of the Central Committee had moved further to the left, while Xavier do Amaral and others advocated a decidedly less radical approach in dealing with the new circumstances. When, in January 1976, Xavier do Amaral proposed that Fretilin work towards a solution where the UN were asked to arrange a referendum on self-determination, this was flatly rejected by Nicalo Lobato and others, on grounds that independence had already been unilaterally declared only two months earlier, on November 28, 1975.

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113 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit. p. x.
116 Kiernan, p. 115.
At a meeting in Barique in April 1976, the Maoists within Fretilin also rejected the suggestion that the Soviet Union be approached for help; on the ground that “social imperialism” was an enemy on a par with the US.117 Regarding the nature of the war, the May 1976 conference in Soibada adopted the Mao inspired strategy of ‘people’s war’, i.e. for Fretilin to become one with a mobilized population. The argument against this reasoning – as put forth by Amaral and others - was the terrible price in terms of loss of life among the women, children and elderly people that the constant fighting exacted. The majority of central committee members had always rejected the idea of negotiation with the enemy. The debate carried on at the time was centred on whether Fretilin should accept a compromise with the Indonesians and agree to become its client state or stand by its policy of opposition to neocolonialism and persevere in the struggle for total independence.118

Reflecting these differences, and the increasing power of the left-wing radicals, Xavier do Amaral did not turn up at the Lalini conference. He had, as some saw it, withdrawn to his kingdom where he enjoyed his feudal privileges (he was the liurai of Turiscai). At Lalini, Fretilin declared itself to be a Marxist-Leninist party, thereby formally choosing the same path as had Frelimo in Mozambique in February of that same year.119 Fretilin also declared the principle of “no negotiations - ever” (negociação – não & nunca) at Lalini.

However, the split was far from being an academic matter about philosophical perspectives on resistance against the enemy. As we have seen, UDT members and other former enemies of Fretilin had been killed in revenge-motivated massacres during the early stage of the resistance struggle. As ideological differences widened into deep chasms, violence was soon tragically to transform into internal killings among Fretilin itself, and even to civilians supposedly under Fretilin protection.120

Foreign visitors – and suppliers.

During the period described above, a long-standing tradition began of organised and tightly controlled visits by foreign politicians and/or journalists to Indonesian-held areas. The first to be treated to such excursions were two US Congress members, both of whom had attended the Congressional hearing on East Timor the previous month. Republican member Goodling and Democratic member Meyner visited Dili, Baucau, Remexio and Bobonaro between 11 and 13 April 1977. The surroundings of these towns were heavily bombarded prior to the visits. The visitors made no attempt to see past what their hosts wanted them to see, and never asked to be allowed to get in touch with Fretilin representatives. During a later “tour of Timor” by a small group of foreigners, in July 1977, Australian journalist Richard Carleton, however, managed to slip out of the net of Indonesian escorts and obtained eyewitness accounts of killings during the first day of the invasion. Carleton’s exposure led to the postponement for some time of more arranged visits. Also, the Indonesian military’s plan to launch a heavy assault on the areas still under Fretilin’s control were now reaching their completion, and there was no place for foreign observers in this scenario.121

An ominous new pattern was now visible, for those who were in a position to see the signs; certainly not for those besieged by the numerically far superior Indonesian military. By early 1977 at least four Sabre Jets were supplied to Indonesia by Australia, with Malaysia as go-

117 Niner (ed.) 2000b, op. cit.
120 Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, p. 239.
121 It must be mentioned that between these two ideological sides within Fretilin was also a majority of ‘unpoliticised’ members. See Sara Niner, op. cit, p. 43.
122 Taylor, op. cit., pp. 83-84
between to hide the origin of the planes. Soon after, a number of Bronco OV-10 Faircraft counter-insurgency planes were delivered from the Rockwell International Corporation; furnished to Indonesia through official US military sales credit.\textsuperscript{122} By utilising American-supplied arms in the invasion, Indonesia had violated a 1958 Washington-Jakarta agreement prohibiting the use of US arms for external aggression. This was one of the reasons that Jakarta long insisted that 'volunteers' and East Timorese 'combined forces' had attacked Dili in December 1975. It was now being claimed that the 1958 agreement was not valid since East Timor was integrated into Indonesia, and that the planes therefore could not be seen as being used for external aggression.\textsuperscript{123} It appears that the Indonesian authorities may not even have been aware of any ‘policy review’ before they obtained the Broncos! The Indonesian navy also replaced, in early 1977, an ageing Soviet-made flotilla with patrol-boats from the Netherlands, Taiwan, South Korea, the US and Australia, plus submarines from West Germany.\textsuperscript{124}

Unbeknownst to Fretilin/Falintil and the population under their protection, total disaster was looming ahead.

\textsuperscript{122} Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 14. See also John Taylor, 1991, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{123} Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., pp. 45-47.
\textsuperscript{124} Taylor, op. cit., p. 84.

**War against the population**

In September 1977 Denis Reichle, a French journalist, clandestinely entered East Timor crossing the border from Indonesian Timor and later reported that Indonesian forces were wiping out the populations of villages where there were known or suspected Fretilin supporters, and destroying Fretilin supply lines and sources. He wrote that Catholic missionaries were the only voices in Timor trying to stop the systematic killing off of East Timorese, and that a German priest had been driven insane by the killings in his area.¹

And that was only the beginnings of what was to come during the three massive military campaigns that Indonesia launched between September 1977 and March 1979, resulting in total defeat for Falintil as a regular military force and near annihilation of a large part of East Timor’s population. On 26 March 1977, with major towns taken by ABRI, and East Timor officially (albeit unilaterally) seen as Indonesia’s 27th province, Operasi Seroja – the invasion operation - was disbanded. In no way however did this mean that Indonesia controlled more than limited areas of the territory. It took 18 months of unspeakable terror to change that. And this is where the assumptions of Indonesia’s allies – and of Indonesia itself – proved to be not only wrong, but utterly and terribly so.

Before that, however, Suharto made the gesture of inviting 20 young East Timorese orphans to his private residence in Jakarta, in a highly symbolic meeting. They were part of a group of 61 small children in the care of a foundation established by Suharto, with the help of Kalbuadi, who had been sent to Java to be cared for and educated. On 3 September 1977, the governor of East Timor, in the presence of Suharto and his wife and members of the Indonesian press formally handed over the children to the governor of Central Java where the children were to live. This meeting with the children occurred shortly after Suharto, on 16 August 1977, Indonesia’s Independence Day, offered an amnesty to Fretilin. Through his meeting with the 20 orphans, bapak (father) Suharto symbolically extended the invitation to all Timorese to be part of the Indonesian family. This was totally in line with New Order propaganda, which argued that Indonesians and the people of East Timor were ‘brothers’; that they shared a common heritage (the myth of the Majapahit empire, cf. Ch. 2) and had only been separated by Dutch and Portuguese colonialism. It was a patriarchal view, in which the East Timorese were referred to as the ‘child’ who had been lost and now had returned.²

Fretilin, on the other hand, felt no urgent need to return to the fatherly house, and the offer of amnesty was turned down. So, on 12 October 1978 a new Operation Seroja Task Force Command (Kogasgab Seroja) was established. The Seroja Joint Task Force was placed under the control of Regional Military Command XVI/Udayana (Kodam XVI/Udayana), which included the Indonesian provinces of Bali, and West and East Nusa Tenggara. These changes signalled a judgment by ABRI that it had substantially achieved military victory over

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Fretillin/Falintil, and that “normalisation” would soon be in order. The ministerial decree establishing the new command stated:

From the time of its founding and in the shortest possible time Operasi Seroja Joint Task Force Command (is to) destroy the remnants of the armed Gang of Security Disturbers (Gerombolan Pengacau Keamanan) to maintain and increase the security of the region, and to assist in preparing to normalize the functioning of the civil administration by carrying out Domestic Security Operations in the province of East Timor.\(^3\)

At the end of 1977 Fretillin areas began to be bombarded heavily, beginning in border and coastal areas. Large Indonesian troop concentrations were then amassed through helicopter drops into more inaccessible sectors. Air strikes were supported, where possible, by naval bombardment. This went on for the next half year. Fighting was particularly heavy south of Dili, where the bombardment was reaching a ‘barbarous stage’, according to Alarico Fernandes, Fretillin’s Minister of Information, in a radio broadcast on 17 June 1978.\(^4\) From this time forward the population was forced to flee from one area to another without being able to plant crops.\(^5\)

The East Timorese Catholic Church – a change of direction.

In the background to all of this, there was a shift within the local Catholic Church, which would have great repercussions in the future. José Joaquim Ribeiro, the then Bishop of Timor (cf. Ch. 9), saw the invading forces on 7 December 1975 as liberators who had come to rescue the East Timorese from Fretillin’s alleged communism and atheism.\(^6\) Less than a year later, he left for Lisbon, sickened and grief-strucken by the violence perpetrated by the ‘liberators’. In his absence, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Dili, Martinho da Costa Lopes (henceforth called Dom Martinho) became the de-facto Bishop.

On numerous occasions he protected women at his residence, leading to complaints from the Indonesian military.\(^7\) And he was not alone in doing so; in churches and convents across the territory, people found physical protection and psychological comfort from the horrors brought on by the war. Boavida writes of the period 1974-1975 as a period of transition for the Catholic Church. Some among the priests supported the idea of self-determination, some espoused the idea of continuing association with Portugal, and some found the idea of integration with Indonesia attractive.\(^8\) João Boavida has shown how the first of these options gradually attained dominance, how the Catholic Church in East Timor became a ‘religion of resistance’ rather than, as previously, a religion which supported the status quo of Portuguese colonialism. This shift was, according to Boavida, prompted by two main factors; the staggering degree of violence perpetrated by the invading forces and the fact that, because of


\(^{4}\) Quoted in Kohen and Taylor, op. cit., p. 53. Radio contact with East Timor had by then re-established by CIET in Australia’s Northern Territory, following the shutdown described in chapter 10. Again, it was Darwin-based Brian Manning who chose the site and planned the set-up in cooperation with Denis Freney in Sydney. The actual operator was Chris Elenor, a recent English immigrant to Australia


\(^{8}\) Boavida, op. cit., p. 78.
the departure of the colonial government, the Catholic clergy ceased to be regarded as a
threatening entity.9

In 1977 the Vatican appointed, in the absence of the self-exiled Bishop Ribeiro, for the
first time an indigenous East Timorese, Dom Martinho, as Apostolic Administrator of East
Timor.10 The Diocese of Dili then ceased to be dependent on the Portuguese Catholics
Bishops Conference and became directly answerable to the Vatican.11 At about the same time,
in a two-pronged move, the Vatican appointed the Spaniard Pablo Puente as its’ pro-Nuncio –
the Vatican’s Ambassador – to Jakarta.12 Puente already at an early stage became friends with
the man who had led the attack on East Timor, General and fellow Catholic Benny Murdyani.
The result was that the Vatican was informed (or, rather, misinformed) about the situation in
East Timor via Murdyani and Puente, while the Church of East Timor felt abandoned and
betrayed.13 Dom Martinho remembered years later, that until his resignation in 1983, he
received only one message of solidarity, from a French priest.14

In the Vatican itself, Secretary of State between the years 1979-1990 was Agostino
Casaroli, who held the view that Indonesian takeover was irreversible and resistance was both
futile and harmful. Pat Walsh of ACFOA, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, met both
Pablo Puente and his counterpart at the UN, Monsignor Ettore de Filippo, in 1980, and both
shared Casaroli’s view, which meant cooperation with Indonesia to protect the interest of the
local Church.15

Six Catholic priests clearly opted to side with the majority of the population, by taking
refuge in areas under control of Fretilin forces. One of them was Father de Rego.16 He spent
three years in the bush with Fretilin before being captured and expelled to Portugal, and said
in an interview with Jill Jolliffe in Canberra Times, 22 August 1979, that hunger became a
problem only in late 1977, when Indonesian attacks intensified. Up until this time Fretilin had
a civil administration, with schools, health care centres and regular Central Committee
meetings. A Renal (Reabilitação Nacional, National Rehabilitation) was established at
Nundamar, a small village east of Remexio, where Fretilin trained it’s own nurses. It also
functioned as home base for the Fretilin Central Committee and training ground for it’s
political leadership. Also, many of those found guilty of criminal (or political, after
September 1977) offences were imprisoned there.17 The Escudo was used as currency in
liberated zones, rather than the Indonesian Rupiah, and local bazaars functioned as they had in
pre-war times.

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10 Apostolic Administrations are a creation of the Latin Church’s 1983 Code of Canon Law, denoting areas
where there are Catholic communities, but where there are important reasons for not establishing dioceses. Such
reasons can be political instability, lack of any internal structures and ecumenical concerns. Timor Leste in 1977
fitted in well with those reasons. Regardless of this technicality, the people of East Timor routinely referred to
the Apostolic Administrator as their ‘Bishop’.
11 Boavida, op. cit., p. 90.
12 It seems that his predecessor, Vinzencio Farano, got cold feet upon realizing the atrocities that followed the
invasion. According to Arnold Kohen’s biography of Bishop Belo, Farano was seen by the clergy in Dili, and
even in the Fretilin controlled areas, as a courageous person who visited them often, and gave them great moral
support, although this “did not result in any forthright public statement by the Vatican ...” (Kohen, op. cit., p.
126.)
203.
14 Ibid.
15 CAVR, 2006, p. 70.
17 Constâncio Pinto & Matthew Jardine, East Timor’s Unfinished Struggle. Inside the Timorese Resistance. A
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Fretilin falls upon itself

All this would soon come to an end, as would much of the solidarity within Fretilin, which, as we have already seen, was already increasingly fragile and wrought with mistrust and violence. This intra-Fretilin split escalated and got completely out of hand, as did the party’s treatment of civilian “suspects” as the Indonesian assault and resulting pressure increased. The strengthening of the position of the left-wing radicals within the Fretilin leadership, and especially within DOPI (the Department of Political and Ideological Orientation), meant a development towards “an atmosphere of violence and ideologically-based intolerance which provided the preconditions in which this wide range of killings could occur.” In the words of Xanana Gusmão, later to become the leader of the resistance, “we could feel that something was not right but none of us knew - only DOPI knew what was going on.”

I have described above how elements within Fretilin massacred members of UDT and Apodeti shortly after the invasion. Also after that ordinary Fretilin members on some occasions killed UDT-members in revenge for perceived or real misdeeds pre-invasion. However, at least on some occasions, higher-level Fretilin officials were involved in the killings, such as in Venilale, where about 60 people were executed or died in detention between 1 and 12 February 1976. The major turning-point towards intra-Fretilin violence, however, was reached later in that same year.

On 7 September 1977, Xavier do Amaral was arrested and deposed as president of Fretilin, charged with treason and (following his refusal to attend the meeting at Laline in May) having planned secret negotiations with the enemy, plotted to seize full power, and creating divisions between the military and civilian sectors of the resistance. Part of the accusations was also that he behaved like a traditional feudal lord, which in fact he also was. On September 14, Nicolau Lobato denounced do Amaral in a speech broadcast by Fretilin radio, thus making the deposal of do Amaral as Fretilin’s president known also to the outside world.

20 CAVR, 2005, op. cit., p. 60.
21 Niner, op. cit., p. 49.
According to the UDT-captive Arsenio Ramos Horta, a man called Mario Bonifacio had under torture confessed that he was a member of a secret group, headed by do Amaral, prepared to eliminate opposing, i.e. radical, Fretilin leaders. Following Bonifacio’s confession, Nicolau Lobato (brother of Rogério, who played a decisive role during the UDT/Fretilin civil war) organised a force of some 160 men who captured do Amaral and killed his closest aides. do Amaral himself was tortured and detained in a hole in the ground.23

On September 14, Nicolau Lobato denounced do Amaral in a speech broadcast by Fretilin radio, thus making the deposal of do Amaral as Fretilin’s president known also to the outside world.24 In this broadcast, do Amaral was accused of being a saboteur, capitulationist, traitor, lackey of imperialism, counter-revolutionary, racist, obscuranist, feudalist and opportunist, plus guilty of superstition, megalomania, and polygamy. Xavier do Amaral was also derated for his suggestion that the UN be asked to hold a referendum on self-determination which, if carried out, would have effectively meant a nullifying of the unilateral declaration of independence proclaimed by Fretilin on 28 November 1975.25

Then followed, according to Arsenio Ramos Horta, “a frenzy of torture and killings of his aides and supporters, including members of OPMT (Popular Organisation of Timorese Women, cf. ch. 9) in their case also including rape.”26 This statement by Horta is corroborated by CAVR, which in its 2005 assessment writes that:

In the Fretilin internal conflict that erupted in 1977 several hundred followers and suspected followers of the Fretilin President, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, were executed or died as a result of torture and ill-treatment in detention …. Those targeted included members of the Fretilin Central Committee, senior military commanders and middle-level cadres of Fretilin and its affiliate organisations as well as ordinary Fretilin members, troops and members of the civilian population living in the Fretilin bases.27

Civilians were killed for various reasons:

- Suspected of planning to surrender
- Local leaders who had encouraged the population to surrender
- People who broke away from the main population concentrations and were captured
- Villagers suspected of or actually belonging to “pro-integration” parties
- Persons holding dissenting ideological views
- The relatives of collaborators, as well as collaborators themselves.28

Xanana Gusmão admits in his autobiography that:

We have committed crimes against our own brothers and, during this difficult war, we have spent more time in arresting and assassinating compatriots than thinking effectively about capable defence of the Homeland, the results of which were evident in the events of 1978.29

25 Pat Walsh, Winter of the Patriarchs. ETAN, 9 May 2012.
27 CAVR, 2005, op. cit., p. 60.
28 Ibid, p. 61.
29 Niner, op. cit., p.132.
Amidst all this infighting, it was declared in early November 1977 that Nicolau Lobato had been elected Fretilin’s second President. Mari Alkatiri was appointed Foreign Minister, while José Ramos Horta – who previously held that post – was delegated as Fretilin’s permanent representative at the UN. Fretilin’s Central Committee was to consist of 67 members (seven of whom were in Mozambique at the time) and all decisions were to be made by the core leadership. Rogerio Lobato explained to the outside supporters in a statement in January 1978 that the new leadership structure was a result of opposing views within Fretilin, with a ‘revolutionary’ line winning over a ‘capitulationistic’ line (echoing the Chinese critique of the Soviet Union post-1963.) Xavier do Amaral was also accused of wanting to ‘depoliticise’ the armed resistance, which stood in contrast to the revolutionary view, where soldiers were to take part in political studies and collective production of provisions just like everybody else.

Nicolau Lobato, later portrayed by an admiring Xanana Gusmão as ”intelligent, inclusive, consultative, methodical and moderate”; in short a role model for leadership, nevertheless was not able to contain Fretilin’s internal conflicts. These conflicts, however tragic and inconducive to the struggle against the outside enemy, diminished in comparison to what that enemy was capable of.

The war escalates

“The events of 1978”, alluded to by Gusmão above, were to be truly horrible, even by post-invasion East Timor standards. It began with a short period of relative peace. Despite the heavy losses of lives among both civilians and troops the Indonesian military objective – to crush the resistance – was thwarted. Radio Maubere reported on 19 January 1978 that between 150,000 and 200,000 Timorese still managed to hold out in Fretilin held areas, and the wet season made it difficult for the Indonesian military to continue its massive campaign on the ground. Nothing hindered, however, the influx of new, advanced military equipment. Indonesia’s overwhelming military superiority was further strengthened as the earlier mentioned Broncos and Sabres were added to. From Washington came transport airplanes, armoured cars, rifles, pistols, communications equipment etc. France generously supplied armoured cars and tanks to the Indonesian army, and Alouette attack helicopters to the air force. The Alouette was ideally suited to low-flying missions in the mountainous interior of East Timor. In April the British Aerospace Company increased Indonesia’s ability to strike against Fretilin by supplying 8 Hawk ground-attack aircraft. This was followed in June by a delivery from Australia of Nomad reconnaissance aircraft.

Before that, on January 20 1978, Australia had officially recognised Indonesia’s de facto sovereignty over East Timor on 20 January 1978. As Bill Nicol puts it:
Australian recognition of Indonesian control was pretty well the last important act concerning Timor on the international stage. Australia, Indonesia and Portugal all had what they wanted. The Timorese were losers in the high-stakes game of international intrigue and deception. They could now be swept under the carpet and gradually forgotten.36

Thus, one of the worst instances of mass killings in modern history was to be enacted behind closed doors, aided by states that supplied the murderers with political support, weapons and/or silence.37 Armed by, and with the tacit support of, leading Western countries, the Indonesian military launched a new military operation in May 1978, as soon as the dry season commenced. It was led by General Yusuf, newly-appointed Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of ABRI, in preparation for a planned visit to East Timor by Indonesian president Suharto. It was concentrated to an area south of Dili, most of which was still in Fretilin’s hands.38

Fresh Indonesian troops, supported by US- and British supplied aircraft, destroyed Falintil positions in several encirclement operations. One report noted that as many as sixteen Indonesian battalions were employed on the ground, while the civilian population living behind Fretilin lines was intensely bombarded, causing heavy casualties.39 From mid-1978, Indonesian forces gradually took over effective control of most of East Timor, and by July the Indonesian authorities considered East Timor to be safe enough for a visit by President Suharto. During two days, 16 and 17 July, Suharto visited Dili and Maliana, near the border of West Timor. Foreign journalists accompanying the president were not allowed to leave Dili. A week before Suharto’s visit, on 8 July, former Apodeti-leader Guilherme Gonçalves, now Governor of Timor Timur, said in an interview with the Indonesian weekly Tempo that East Timor was not yet ready to participate in Indonesia’s forthcoming five-year development plan, Repelita III. Gonçalves said that “there must be peace and calm among the people first. At present, people can only get on with their jobs in places where our army has a concentration of forces, such as Dili, Same, and Maliana.”40

In stark contrast to this observation, the Indonesian representative in a statement delivered before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation, on 25 August 1978, said (abridged):

Mr. Chairman. The decolonisation process was terminated in July 1976. Order has been restored and peace prevails in the territory. The so-called Fretilin no longer exists in East Timor. Internal peace and security have been restored in the province.41

Even as he spoke, the war continued in East Timor. Shortly after, Fretilin’s deposed President, Xavier do Amaral, was captured - or surrendered to the Indonesians - after Fretilin lost the

37 East Timor activist Rob Wesley-Smith, angered by Australia’s complicity in the ongoing tragedy, and following reports that Indonesia was using napalm in its aerial bombing campaign, declared in July 1978 that he would burn a dog in Darwin’s Raintree Park as a gesture of support for East Timor. More than 600 people, 15 police and a fire engine gathered in the park on 14 July. ‘Of course I wasn’t going to burn a dog’ he said, countering the shouts and heckles and holding up a toy dog. ‘You have proved my point – you are more concerned with the life of one dog than for thousands of East Timorese lives (David Scott, *Last Flight out of Dili. Memoirs of an accidental activist in the triumph of East Timor*. North Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2005, p. 272.)
38 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 27.
39 Niner, op. cit., p. 55.
40 Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 54.
41 IWGIA, op. cit., p. 62.
town of Remexio. The Indonesians then made Amaral hold a speech where he said that: “I am Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the former president of Fretilin. Because of many ideas and many egos, many people have died. Today, I am here before you, alive. You can do whatever you want to me. I’m ready to accept responsibility for all the human suffering in East Timor.” To this speech, held in Tetun, he added at the end, “We will win” in Mambai, a local language unintelligible to his Indonesian captors.

Having cornered the resistance in the eastern part of the country, the Indonesian government in early September 1978 led a party of foreign diplomats and journalists through a few towns controlled by Indonesia. The visitors were shocked. Many East Timorese, living in centres referred to by the Indonesian authorities as ‘transit camps’, were suffering from advanced malnutrition and various diseases. David Jenkins of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* wrote, on 29 September 1978, of ‘Timor’s Arithmetic of Despair’, with 60,000 dead, 125,000 passing through, or living in, squalid refugee camps, while Indonesian officials estimated that there could be as many as 100,000 more people still hiding in the mountains:

It is the arithmetic of despair, a social and political upheaval of such magnitude that its significance is still only dimly understood. Today, two years after its official incorporation into Indonesia, East Timor is in a state of deep collective trauma. In Remexio, as in most other towns, the people are stunned, sullen and dispirited. Emaciated as a result of deprivation and hardship, they are struggling to make sense of the nightmarish interlude in which as much as half of the population was uprooted.

With the visitors gone, the third stage of the massive military campaigns began. This time the area concentrated on was the Matebian mountain range, south-east of Baucau, and the lowland coastal plain of Natarbora to the west. These areas then housed two major populations of people who had still not given up to the Indonesian military; about 30,000 in the Matebian and 60,000 in the Natarbora area. The main Indonesian attack was against Matebian. The Indonesian military launched a scorched-earth policy to destroy the agricultural system in the region, followed by a campaign of intensive air and sea bombardment. Matebian is regarded as a holy site in the animist religion of East Timor; venerated as the place where the soul migrates after death. And deaths there would be. ‘Lourenzo’, one of the fighters at Matebian, many years later recalled to Michele Turner:

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Our section in the east was the last to be attacked. In 1978 they started to come against us. At first we didn’t resist, just watched the enemy, let them feel confident … and that’s when we started to fight back. For those first two months, October and November, we were very successful and about 3000 Australians died. Then they got angry and scared to come close and started to bomb us from the air. They bombed twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon with four black planes. Their name I know now is Broncos, but we called them scorpions because they had a tail that curves up at the back like that insect. Then they got some new supersonic planes. Our people were very frightened of those because you didn’t even hear they were there until they were gone. Those supersonics would zoom along the valley so fast we couldn’t shoot them. Three supersonics came to bomb for about forty-five
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42 For a short while, do Amaral was appointed deputy to the then provincial Governor, Guillherme Goncalves, but the Indonesians eventually removed him from Dili to Bali, to the house of Brigadier-General Dading Kalbuadi, with “little more than servant status”, looking after the officer’s 34 horses for 1000 rupiah a month (James Dunn, *Timor. A People Betrayed*. Milton, Queensland: The Jacaranda Press, 1983, p. 316. See also Pat Walsh, *Winter of the Patriarchs*. ETAN, 9 May 2012.).
43 Pinto & Jardine, op. cit. p. 73.
44 IWGIA, op. cit., p. 74.
45 Kohen, op. cit., p. 29.
minutes and then went back to reload. Half an hour later the black scorpions came, and this would go on all day.46

Betrayal and distrust within Fretilin.

In the midst of this Indonesian massive attack on Matebian, Denis Freney in Sydney intercepted a radio-transmitted message from Alarico Fernandes addressed to José Ramos Horta. According to Freney, Fernandes invited Horta to join a coup against Nicolau Lobato and open negotiations with Indonesia. Freney reported this to Abílio Araújo in Mozambique.47 Horta was at the time in New York. This left Araújo and others in Maputo with two choices a) to denounce Fernandes in the hope that Lobato would receive their message. This however, seemed unlikely to succeed, since Alarico Fernandes was in charge of the Fretilin radio. They chose instead to deliver messages back to Fernandes, pretending that the sender was Ramos-Horta. According to David Scott, Freney and Araújo saw this as an opportunity to discredit not only Horta, but also others who lent towards his ‘democratic socialist’ position and diplomatic campaigning, so different from the policy of the Fretilin leftist hardliners.48

This “leftist policy” included visits to, and maintaining fraternal contacts with, the People’s Democratic Republic of Kampuchea and the People’s Democratic Republic of Laos. For instance, Rogério Lobato met with Ieng Sary, Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs, Democratic Republic of Kampuchea, on 21 December 1977.

While this was going on, José Ramos-Horta and Mari Alkatiri were in New York for the annual UN debate on East Timor. During their absence, their wives and some others were detained by Araújo and others at Matola, the small Fretilin settlement outside Maputo.49 One of the detainees, Leonel Andrade was attacked with a knife and badly injured. Horta’s wife, who was about to have a baby, was locked up by the man who had cut Andrade, while Alkatiri’s wife was taken to a hospital where she managed to contact Frelimo officials, who intervened and placed the detainees under their custody. When Ramos Horta and Alkatiri returned to Mozambique from New York, Freney had accused José of being a traitor and said that the Central Committee in East Timor wanted him detained. It was decided that José

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47 The DFSE, *Delegação da Fretilin em serviços no Exterior*, (the Fretilin Delegation for External Service), had by then, ‘In fulfillment of the resolution from the political Committee of the Central Committee of FRETILIN, dated the 4TH of May of 1977’ - i.e. the Lalini meeting - held a plenary meeting in Maputo in late August 1977, where they unanimously decided to remodel the external delegation in accordance with the guidelines outlined at Lalini. Mari Alkatiri from now on had the functions of Secretary of the Foreign Relation Department of the FRETILIN and Foreign Relations Minister of RDTL, Plenipotentiary; thereby ceasing to be the National Political Commissioner of Fretilin and State Minister for Political Affairs of the RDTL. Abílio de Araújo became Itinerant Ambassador, no longer Political Commissioner of Fretilin and State Minister for Economic and Social Affairs of RDTL. Rogério Lobato, received the title of Military Adviser with the Minister of Foreign Relations, ceasing the functions of General Commander of Falintil and National Defense Minister of the RDTL. José Ramos Horta now officially became Fretilin Representative for the United Nations and Ambassador of the RDTL, ceasing the functions of Secretary of the Foreign Relations Department of Fretilin and Foreign Relations Minister of RDTL. Also present at the meeting, but not ‘remodeled,’ were Roque Rodrigues, Ambassador of RDTL and Permanent Representative of Fretilin at the People’s Republic of Mozambique, José Maria Sarmento, the Permanent Representative of Fretilin at the People’s Republic of Angola and Person in Charge of RDTL Business, and Leonel de Andrade, the Fretilin Representative for Europe. (RDTL, Democratic Republic of Timor Leste Circular letter N 1/77.)
48 Scott, op. cit., p. 249.
49 Fretilin had established headquarters at Matola, where they had been offered a tract of land by the Mozambique government. The East Timorese community there eventually numbered about forty men, women and children.
should be kept in Matola until communications could be restored with the Central Committee in East Timor. Thus, Horta was held up, along with Alkatiri, Marina Ribeiro and Ana Pessoa. Freney sent a telegram saying he would no longer organise communications with East Timor if the Central Committee freed José.

Ramos Horta in a letter complained that “I am virtually under house arrest … I am stabbed in the back because I am not a communist.” Being tied up in Mozambique from September 1978 to February 1979, José Ramos Horta missed both a planned visit to New Zealand – where the local branch of CIET had run a vigorous “let Horta speak” campaign, and pressured the government into relinquishing its earlier decision to deny Horta a visa - and a session at the UN General Assembly, at which Fretilin lost eight countries during the yearly vote.

In the end, Horta was freed from the accusations. He later gave credit to the Frelimo authorities for the way they had handled the intra-Fretilin dispute. The whole affair meant, among other things, that Freney lost his position as strategic middle-man between East Timor and Mozambique. This in turn also meant that the less radical organisations in support of East Timor, such as ACFOA and ACET (Australian Coalition for East Timor) gained in importance. It also led, of course, to a decidedly uneasy relation between the Maputo based ‘external front’ and the ‘diplomatic front’, led by Ramos Horta.

The war is lost

Back in Timor, Matebian fell on 22 November and a great number of East Timorese civilians and troops were killed. Natatarbora was overrun by Indonesian forces in December. By this time, the food situation was desperate and sickness was widespread, so the encircled population had no alternative but to surrender.

It was then announced on Radio Jakarta on 3 December that Alarico Fernandes, Fretilin’s Minister of Information, had been captured, together with several other Fretilin Central Committee members. This report was contradicted by an announcement made by Fretilin in Mozambique, on 7 December, which said that Fernandes had surrendered to Indonesian forces, after the failure of a plan, ‘Operation Skylight’ he had drawn up with other Central Committee members (such as Xavier do Amaral), in which they asked the Indonesian military to contact them and support them in the setting up a ‘Council of National Salvation’, which would negotiate with the Indonesian government. According to Budiardjo and Liong, Fernandes and others had long believed that the Socialist world would come to the aid of Fretilin. Bitterly realizing that this was not the case, Fernandes gradually shifted towards Amaral’s position of compromise. He succeeded in persuading several Fretilin commanders as well as some regional political commissars that it was futile to continue the war. He was also accused of having collaborated with the Indonesian military intelligence, even to the point of revealing the location of resistance units. As a result, some Fretilin commanders and

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50 Ibid, p. 250.
51 CAVR, op. cit., p. 83.
53 Barbdeo de Magalhães & Liem Soei Liong, East Timor and Indonesia. Global Context and Local Actors. Porto: IASI, International Institute for Asian Studies and Interchange, 2007, p. 12. While ‘diplomatic front’ may sound as if Horta and others were living in splendour, the truth was that Horta during this period in New York was for the most part living in what he has described as ‘run-down sublets’, supported by first Mozambique and then Angola with 500 or sometimes a thousand dollar per month to cover all expenses (Kerry Kennedy, Speak Truth to the Power. Human Rights Defenders who are Changing the World. New York: Umbrage Editions, 2005, p. 163.)
54 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 33.
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their troops left their hideouts and surrendered. They were all killed, except Fernandes. However, his wife and daughter were raped in his presence, and he was later exiled to the island of Sumba.

When he surrendered, Fernandes had named the six most intransigent, in his point of view, Fretilin leaders to the Indonesians. They were the new President Nicolao Lobato, the vice- and Justice Minister Mau Lear, the national Political Commissioner Vicente Sa'he, Education Minister Hamis Bassarewan, Economy Vice Minister Helio Pina and Commissioner Carlos Cesar. These six “intransigents” were soon to be reduced in number.

The loss of Fernandes, and with him Fretilin’s radio transmitter, was followed by another blow on New Year’s Eve 1978, when Nicolau Lobato was killed in a battle south of Dili. The Indonesian unit was led by Lietunant Prabowo Subianto, who was immediately made Captain following the killing of Lobato. Later he rose even higher, when he became Suharto’s son-in-law. He will appear again later in this chapter.

Prabowo (in T-shirt) and nanggalas

Twenty other Fretilin troops fell with Lobato, including Deputy Defence Minister Guido Soares. Fretilin’s external front – who had by then overcome their worst differences - announced that the presidency would now be shared jointly by Vice-President Mau Lear (Carvarininho), National Political Commissioner Vicente Sa’he, and Minister of Education and Culture Hamis Basarewa. Mau Lear was tracked down and executed on 2 February 1979. Later that month, pursuing Indonesian troops wounded Sahe in the leg. He ordered his fleeing comrades to leave him where he fell. Basserwan, Helio Pina and Carlos Cesar all disappeared. In the east, Xanana sent a young Falintil commander, José Maria de Vasconcelos, better known as Taur Matan Ruak, to the central sector to “find the Resistance Executive,” but his unit was betrayed and trapped near Viqueque. Ruak surrendered on 31 March. He managed to escape after twenty-three days, and would later become Falintil Deputy Chief of Staff. From September 1977 to February 1979, the Fretilin central command was virtually destroyed. Only three of the 52 Central Committee members survived, all in the eastern zone: Minister of Finance and political commissar Sera Key, Xanana Gusmão (chief of the eastern sector, Ponte Leste), and Mau Hunu (deputy secretary of the eastern region command). David Alex, who

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56 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 36.
had commanded elite companies until the fall of Mt. Matebian, also remained active in the
east, his forces intact, including fourteen troops from his native village there.57
In March, 200 Falintil fighters gave themselves up, after some of their commanders had
 collaborated with an Indonesian field-commander, Major Iswanto. The Tetun-speaking
Iswanto had convinced the commanders that they be offered amnesty and reunification with
their families if they gave up themselves up. Instead, they all ‘disappeared’ one by one after
their surrender. At Quelicai, more than 100 soldiers and their families were shot following
their capture.58
In the midst of this disaster for the East Timorese, the earlier Australian de facto
recognition of Indonesia’s annexation of East Timor was followed by full de jure recognition
in February 1979.59 With ‘ownership’ settled, Australia could resume negotiations over the
Timor Gap, but this time with Indonesia, rather than, as previously, with Portugal.60 Six
weeks later, Australia and Indonesia agreed to negotiate a permanent sea-bed boundary south
of East Timor.61
Declaring East Timor pacified, ABRI brought the second version of Operasi Seroja to an
end, and on 26 March 1979 established the territorial Sub-regional Command 164/Wira
Dharma (Korem 164). This was one of four sub-regional commands under Regional Military
Command XVI/Udayana headquartered in Denpasar, Bali.62 The military victory of ABRI
was followed up from March until July 1979 by operations to round up people and herd them
into ‘resettlements.’63 These operations, referred to as Operasi Pembersihan (Operation
Clean-up) were characterized by the systematic intimidation and terrorization of the
population. Professional killers, known as nanggalas, ‘knife-killers’, were employed
extensively.64 The Nanggala were Indonesian special forces personnel or local Timorese,
recruited and trained to terrorise anti-integrationists and their sympathisers.

57 Kiernan, op. cit., p. 128.
58 Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 47.
59 Nicol, op. cit., p. 317. Australia’s recognition of Indonesian control over East Timor – whether de facto or de
jure - was not only in breach of the UN resolutions dealing specifically with East Timor. Article 5 of Resolution
2734 (XXV) of 1970 deals with the reaffirmation of nations not to use force in their international relations, based
on Article 24 of the UN Charter. According to Article 5 of Resolution 2734 (XXV): ‘No territorial acquisition
resulting from the threat of or use of force shall be recognized as legal’ (Keith Suter, ‘Timor Gap Treaty. The
While Australia was the only Western country to accord de jure recognition to Indonesia’s annexation of
Portuguese Timor, the Australian government was of the view that treaties between Indonesia and Japan and
Indonesia and France also implied de jure recognition by those countries, as the treaties contained clauses in
which Indonesia was specified as the territory defined by Indonesian law, without exempting East Timor (CAVR
(Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste, The Commission for Reception, Truth and
Reconciliation in East Timor), Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in
60 Suter, op. cit., p. 298.
61 Geoffrey C. Gunn, A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor. Manila & Sydney:
63 There was a simultaneous follow-up during this bloody mop-up operation, when on June 16 the US
Government agreed to sell 16 A-4 fighter bombers to the Indonesian Air Force (Taylor, op. cit., p. 22).
64 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 37.
The beginnings of international support

While the ‘clean-up operation’ was in full stride, an International Seminar for East Timor was held in Lisbon in May 1979. Apart from Fretilin representatives and local activists from Portugal there were also more distant attendants such as Ken Fry – who had visited East Timor as part of an Australian delegation in March 1975 (cf. ch. 9)65 - Denis Freney, also from Australia, noted US academic Noam Chomsky, John Taylor from England and Matts Hellström, representing the Swedish Social Democratic party. Hellström and his party had just lost an election and strongly criticized the ruling Liberal-Right-wing coalition in Sweden for allowing export of arms to Indonesia. “The new Right-wing government in Sweden has been selling arms or are making the sale of arms to Indonesia legal and possible. We, in the opposition in Parliament, have attacked and challenged the government’s position, namely that they have sold arms to Indonesia in large quantities … it is very important to stop the arms sales,” Hellström stated in his speech.66 There will be reason to return to this statement presently.

Chomsky spoke of (and later published in a booklet called East Timor and the Western Democracies) a ‘conspiracy of silence’ and ‘treachery of the media’67 – mentioning that Agence France Press (AFP) declined an invitation to a press conference on East Timor at the United Nations by replying that people in Paris were not interested in Timor. And Chomsky further noted that when he himself was asked by a leading American review of journalism to submit an article on news coverage of post-war Indochina, and he instead suggested an article on Timor, arguing that their importance was far greater, this suggestion was refused, on the grounds that virtually no one had heard of Timor, and so there would be no interest in such an article. In Chomsky’s words, “so the circle is complete. First, ‘free press’ suppresses vital information in the service of the state; and then, no discussion of this suppression can take place because it has been so effective that no one has heard of the topic. … a situation that an Orwell might appreciate.”68

Both parties to the conflict were acutely aware of the importance of gaining access to the media – or of refraining the media from accessing developments in Timor:

The tension between legitimacy and fait accompli also explains the contrast between silence and media visibility as fundamental tools for the respective strategies of Indonesia and the Resistance: silence was considered a necessary condition for the successful creation of a fait accompli, and led to the closure of the territory to journalists, NGOs and humanitarian aid until 1988-89, as if it were one gigantic concentration camp; the media, as an instrument for raising public awareness on the illegitimate situation in East Timor, was an utmost priority of both the internal Resistance and the solidarity movements. Clearly, both sides tried strategically to convey the idea that knowledge is a form of (non) power.69

65 Fry had also, among other things, spoken on behalf of East Timor at the UN Security Council in April 1976, in Bulgaria at an International Parliamentary Union conference in 1977, and then in Stockholm, invited specifically because of the interest about East Timor that he initiated in Bulgaria (Clinton Fernandes, ‘News of Timor Leste. Ken Fry remembered’. Accessed at http://timorleste.livejournal.com/61862.html )
66 Retbøll 1984:128
Then again, and besides media being treacherous or conspiratorial, there is always a competitive struggle to make the headlines. The period of Indonesia’s incorporation of Timur Timor as its 27th province, from the fake referendum to the Indonesian government’s formal announcement and recognition of the result, coincided in time with a massacre of demonstrating African students in Soweto by South African police, and subsequent international outrage. I write from a European perspective, and can see the absurdity of assuming that the deposing of Xavier do Amaral and the subsequent purge within Fretilin could cause any noticeable ripple at all in media while at the same time the ‘German Autumn’ and the unleashing of Punk rock on an unsuspecting world vied for European headlines in late 1977. Or much worse; how could the near annihilation of the almost totally unknown entity of East Timor in mid-1978 compete with the football world championship being battled out in Argentina in June that same year? The ‘Operation clean-up’ following the mass killings was likewise hidden from view behind the media attention on the partial nuclear meltdown which occurred at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, on 28 March 1979. In late 1979, Vietnam would invade Kampuchea and the Soviet Union do likewise in Afghanistan; at about the same time a 444 day crisis with US diplomats held hostages in Teheran would begin; a war between Iran and Iraq would cause the loss of perhaps a million lives in the 1980s, with the Falklands war dominating world media attention for a short while in 1982. In the midst of all this John Lennon was shot in December 1980, and Ronald Reagan became US President in January 1981. And then the AIDS-epidemic made the headlines and horrified millions.

In the background to all of this, East Timor simply did not exist, media-wise. I ask the reader to envision his/her own list – adding local murders, sex scandals, natural disasters and sports event – to make a mental picture of what East Timor was up against in this matter. Outside of the small circles of foreign sympathizers and activists, East Timor just did not exist during this period. It would take a prime-time televised massacre to overcome this disparity of focus; which I will return to a few chapters down the road.

‘A grotesque exercise of body count’

After the exposure to visiting diplomats and journalists of famine conditions in the “resettlement villages” in September 1978, an agreement in principle was reached between the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and the Indonesian authorities for an ICRC visit, which took place in April 1979. This was followed in July 1979 by a survey resulting in agreement on a program covering eight villages with about 60,000 inhabitants. The relief operation began in October 1979, more than a year after famine conditions in East Timor had been first exposed. Also the US-based Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was allowed to begin a limited programme of food- and medical distribution. After two months of relief operation, the Indonesian military asked the ICRC to leave the territory in December,

70 The German Autumn was a set of events which began with the failed kidnapping and murder of banker Jürgen Ponto on July 30, 1977, by members of the Red Army Faction (RAF) followed by the kidnapping of industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the hijacking of a Lufthansa airplane by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). They demanded the release of ten imprisoned RAF members and two Palestinians, plus US$15 million in exchange for the hostages. It ended on October 18, with a spectacular liberation of the hostages at Mogadishu airport in Somalia, the suicides of the leading figures of the RAF in their prison cells, and the murder of Schleyer.

71 During this visit the ICRC was also allowed by the Indonesian authorities to let East Timorese apply for repatriation to Portugal. 17,000 people registered to leave, and many of those who made it to Lisbon later told of substantial bribes to the Indonesian military in order to be let out. (Taylor, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

saying that their assistance was no longer needed. The CRS was allowed to remain, on condition that they focus on development aid in the Indonesia controlled areas.73 On November 2, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, published photographs taken in East Timor by their Jakarta based correspondent Peter Rodgers. The photographs showed children who appeared to be on the verge of death. Rodgers was told by one of the Red Cross members that the situation in Timor was ‘as bad as Biafra and potentially as serious as Kampuchea.’74 The photographs were published in the *Washington Post* on Nov. 15.75

![Photo: Peter Rodgers/Fairfax Media.](image)

This report coincided in time with statements made in New York and Washington by Father do Rego – the priest who had spent time with Fretilin in the mountains, following the invasion. Eventually this resulted in a strongly worded editorial in the *New York Times* on December 24, 1979. Soon after, the New York Times sent James Markham to talk to Timorese refugees recently arrived in Portugal.

In four days of interviews at a refugee camp outside Lisbon called the *Vale do Jamor* (Valley of the Jasmine), the refugees spoke of atrocities and terror. "It is the land of the devil", one woman told Markham.76 Having escaped the land of the devil, in no way meant living in paradisiacal circumstances. The conditions at the camp that the over two thousand refugees – all Portuguese citizens – stayed at were appalling. The refugees lived in overcrowded flimsy huts, with inadequate medical facilities, and with very little food and very little money coming in.77 The inhabitants were, however, far better off than most of their

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75 Ibid, p. 23.
76 Kohen, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
77 Kohen & Taylor, op. cit., p. 110
compatriots in East Timor. Many were not so lucky as to flee the territory or survive long enough to be placed in the resettlement camps. And it was the women who fared the worst, and had to endure the harshest treatment when the survivors of the aerial bombings and annihilation campaigns gave themselves up. Many were raped by members of their families, who were threatened with murder if they refused. Other women were forced to become “sex suppliers” to the Indonesian forces. A number of East Timorese women were also forced to marry Indonesian military members in order to protect other women and girls from rape.78

Victims of sexual torture were usually women perceived by the security forces to have a connection to the pro-independence movement. Often these women were target of proxy violence. That is, because the woman’s husband or brother who was being sought by the military was absent, the woman would be raped and tortured, as a means of indirectly attacking the absent target.79 OPMT women were often singled out for more brutal treatment than others.80 The fates of Maria Gorete and Olympia da Costa – later to become symbols of the resistance - serve well to illustrate the level of violence that was part of everyday life during this period. Maria Gorete Joaquim was 17 years old at the time of the invasion. She was openly defiant of the invasion, and passed on information to the armed resistance. She was imprisoned, raped, beaten, and given drugs to make her talk. Out of prison she continued the resistance work. She was rearrested and used by the Indonesians. She became everything to them – from “their prostitute to their interpreter.” In the end, when the Indonesians could no longer cope with her as she made it clear she would not work for them, she was murdered.81

Olympia da Costa was a member of a cell which delivered information and supplies to the armed resistance. In early 1980, she was arrested, tortured and raped; afterwards, she was stripped to the waist and paraded on foot through six villages. She managed to run away from her tormentors, but was recaptured and bayoneted in the throat.82

These two cases were in no way unique. Rape was a part of the occupation strategy as a specific tool to attack women. The degree of rape and other forms of sexual violence reflected the patterns and degree of military activity at the time. Sexual violations increased during periods of major military operations, and decreased when such operations were less frequent.83 And these violations not only took place during military campaigns in the hills of East Timor.

CAVR has found that the following acts directed at East Timorese women took place inside official Indonesian military installations:

- Mutilation of women’s sexual organs, including insertions of batteries into vaginas and burning nipples and genitals with cigarettes
- Use of electric shocks applied to the genitals, breasts and mouth
- Gang rape by members of the security forces
- Forcing of detainees to engage in sexual acts with each other, while being watched and ridiculed by members of the security forces
- Rape of detainees following periods of prolonged sexual torture
- Rape of women who had their hands and feet handcuffed and who were

83 Ibid, p. 119.
blindfolded. In some cases women who were bound in this way were raped until they were unconscious.

- Forceful plucking of pubic hairs in the presence of male soldiers.
- Rape of pregnant women.
- Forcing of victims to be nude, or to be sexually violated in front of strangers, friends and family members. In at least one case a woman was raped in front of her mother and later killed. More commonly, victims were raped and tortured in front of their children.
- Women were raped in front of fellow prisoners as a means of terrorizing both the victim and the other prisoners.
- Keeping lists of local women who could be routinely forced to come to the military post or headquarters so that soldiers could rape them. Lists were traded between military units. In some cases these women were commanded to appear at the military post every morning, in order to be raped by members of the security forces.  

Along the coast to the east of Dili, at the beach called Areia Branca (White Sands), the Indonesian troops disposed of so many corpses of their victims that White sands was renamed Sea of Blood. Tasi Tolu, a dry plain on the western outskirts of Dili has also been used for executions. Many victims of the 1979 round-ups were taken and killed there. Some of them had been captured in 1977 or 1978, detained and then freed. However, when the army considered the security situation to be under threat, ‘suspects’ were rounded up again and killed.  

By forcing the people of East Timor to abandon the homesteads in their widely dispersed hamlets in the mountains, the Indonesians fundamentally disrupted the East Timorese economy. Famine followed the Indonesian bombing raids which ravaged great stretches of productive mountain regions and rice-growing areas of the hill slopes. Starvation reached endemic proportions in 1978 and 1979 during the latter stages of the encirclement and annihilation campaign and the clean-up operation that followed. These operations forced hundreds of thousands of people, stricken by starvation and disease, to enter Indonesian-controlled territory. In the lowland areas, food production had virtually ceased due to the Indonesian invasion; there were no provisions – food or medicine – to cope with the huge influx of people. The loss of life was horrendous. Dom Martinho, the former Apostolic Administrator of Dili, said in a letter which was published in *The Irish Times* on 8 September 1983:

> The population of East Timor has been reduced by 200,000 since the invasion. About 60,000 were killed and about 140,000 died as a result of starvation caused by economic disruption and inability to grow food.  

CAVR, using multiple systems estimation (MSE) techniques, and being reviewed by international experts, arrived in 2005 at an estimate for the number of conflict-related deaths during the Commission’s reference period, 1974-1999, of 102,800 (+/- 12,000) This estimate is derived from (i) an estimated 18,600 total killings (+/- 1000) and (ii) an estimate of 84,200 (+/- 11,000) deaths due to hunger and illness which exceed the total that would be expected if the death rate due to hunger and illness had continued as it was in the pre-invasion peacetime.
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period. Pat Walsh, as Advisor at the Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat has pointed out that the oft-quoted 183,000 as the number of deaths in the CAVR report is the *upper-bound* (my italics) estimate of total conflict-related mortality. Sarah Staveteig, while conceding that the casualty count of the CAVR report is extremely well-documented, it is also, according to her, likely to be lower than the “true” total. Applying what she labels ‘a complementary method of indirect estimation’, she arrives at an estimate of excess mortality in East Timor during the Indonesian occupation of 204,000 persons (+/- 51,000), either due to direct violence or else indirectly.

From a Eurocentric perspective, whatever number one chooses corresponds roughly with the effect of the Plague (also known as the Black Death and other names) in various countries in Europe during the fourteenth century. Sweden, for instance, then had a population of approximately 650,000 (a little lower than the ca. 680,000 in East Timor in 1975) out of which perhaps 225,000-250,000 died. As in the case of East Timor, the exact death-toll of the Plague will never be known, but I believe the comparison to be relevant in that it adds a ghastly point of reference to an otherwise abstract number.

**Resettlement camps**

With Falintil defeated, most of the 1979 civilian population was forced to leave the mountains and move into the camps which had been established by the Indonesian military. The strategic purposes of the camps which the Indonesians called *daerah pemukiman baru* (resettlement areas) was first examined in an Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) report. The camps, it said, were variously referred to as ‘relief centres’, ‘concentration camps’, ‘prisons’ and ‘strategic hamlets’. People had, in the words of one Indonesian parliamentarian, been ordered to move from their own village or district into one or other of these centres ‘to separate the people from the terrorists’.

Initially 150 camps were to be set up with an average population of about 2,000 each. However it is impossible to say how many camps were in existence. In December 1979, the US ambassador to Indonesia, Edward Masters submitted an official map of East Timor to a US Congressional hearing which indicated the locations of the ‘resettlement camps’. The map showed 145 localities, but certainly underestimated the actual numbers.

Overall figures for the number of people “resettled” since 1975, particularly since the large-scale surrenders of 1978 and 1979, vary from 150,000 to 300,000. The discrepancy between the figures is due to the fact that the term ‘resettlement village’ was used to refer both to the encampments in which Timorese had been settled immediately after surrender or capture and the more permanent settlements akin to strategic hamlets. Both types were sited for their accessibility and wider strategic usefulness to Indonesian forces, often in places in the lowlands that had previously been shunned by the population because of the infertility of the land and the prevalence of disease, malaria in particular.

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87CAVR, 2005, op. cit., p. 44.
90Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 78.
91Ibid, p. 79.

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A restructuring of Fretilin

Among the resistance, the earlier structural division of Falintil troops into sector forces, intervention forces and shock brigades, disintegrated after many commanders and guerrillas were killed or captured. From late 1978 the lines of communication between troops in various parts of the country were severed, and the remaining troops split into small units, operating independently from one another. Many of those who, in face of the great difficulties, decided to give themselves up were, as already mentioned killed.93 And some of those who survived their surrender were, rightfully or not, later to be accused of being traitors, adding to the severe strains on East Timor’s social fabric which to this day reverberates throughout the tiny nation. The armed resistance members were, however, not all dead, or even ready to surrender.

In March 1979, there was a meeting at Titilari-Laivai in the central eastern sector between surviving Falintil military leaders – Mauk Muruk, Kilik Wae Gae, Olo Gare, Nelo and Freddy - and their political counterparts in Fretilin – Xanana Gusmão, Ma’Hunu, Mau Hodu, Bere Malay Laka and Fernando Txay - in which the reorganisation of the resistance was discussed. Search parties to find surviving resistance fighters in other parts of the country were sent out. One of those was led by Sera Key, who was captured, taken to Dili and then supposedly dumped in the sea from a helicopter.94 The first two parties never returned. The third and fourth groups returned, but could only report that they had found no other guerrillas. In May 1980 a small unit under the command of Xanana Gusmão travelled along the north coast to the western border. On their way back they engaged in battle with Indonesian troops and retreated to the eastern sector.95 Xanana Gusmão, has told of the welcome he received as he marched through the countryside with fifty surviving soldiers. The old people embraced him, crying, and said “son, continue the struggle, never surrender, you are our only hope”.96

Xanana had acquired a little radio receiver, and the guerrillas were inspired by an interview they heard on radio Australia with a Timorese priest speaking out about the atrocities in East Timor. Once when East Timor was mentioned on the radio, a guerrilla who was listening with Xanana recognised the words in amongst the other foreign language being spoken. The guerrilla, Xanana remembers, began to turn cartwheels, yelling, ‘We are still alive! We are still alive!’97 In October 1980 still one more search party from the east travelled through the central, mountainous part of East Timor, and found isolated guerrilla units in Kablake near the border with West Timor and in the central sector, and by the end of 1980 communications had been established between a number of small surviving units across the territory.

As a result, a Fretilin National Conference was convened in March 1981.98 The conference, held at Lacluta in the eastern central region, resulted in a total overhaul of

93 Lawson pp. 66-70.
94 Kiernan, op. cit., p. 129.
95 One guerrilla group even managed an assault on Dili during this difficult period, with terrible results for many civilians. On 10 June 1980 they attacked the broadcasting station near Dare and the barracks of Battalion 745 in Becora. The resistance fighters then co-opted civilians to carry the arms they had captured into the bush. After several days, hungry and too afraid to go home, the civilians turned themselves over to the bishop, Monsignor da Costa Lopes. The bishop and the priests pleaded with Intel to spare them, but they were shot on the volleyball court of the seminary at Dare and their bodies were thrown into the gully nearby (Lennox 2000:151). In the weeks after the attack, a further 121 people “disappeared”, were executed (sometimes in public) or died in detention as a result of severe torture and deprivation of food and medical treatment (CAVR 2005, op. cit, p. 65). This figure does not include people who were selected for transportation to the island of Ataúro for their alleged involvement in the attacks.
96 Niner 2000b, op. cit., p. 65.
98 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 68.
organisational and political structures. The conference declared that the liberation of the country can only be achieved as the result of mobilizing the entire population to participate in the political and military resistance. Falintil units would now function as mobile units, continually moving from place to place, and to support the armed resistance it was decided to form a network of clandestine organisations inside the strategic camps and in population centres. At the top level, the resistance was now to be led by CRRN (Conselho Revolucionário de Resistência Nacional, the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance, and at the lowest level were the nucleos de resistencia popular (nuclei of popular resistance), known as ‘nureps’ or celcoms, set up to maintain links between the resistance movement in the bush and the clandestine network. Between these two were regional Comissões Regionais de Resistência (CRN – Centres of National Resistance) set up as co-ordinating organisations between the leadership and the nureps.99

Those overseas – José Ramos Horta, Mari Alkatiri, Abílio and Guilhermina Araújo, Rogério Lobato, Roque Rodrigues and José Luis Guterres - retained their positions. With the creation of CRRN, Fretilin lost its complete control of the resistance and became instead the largest faction or party within the overarching nationalist umbrella council. This change would lead to splits in Fretilin between those who also supported CRRN and those who wanted Fretilin to remain in control.100 However, the executive body of CRRN was still the old Fretilin Central Committee (CCF) and therefore the CRRN Council was still a Fretilin body.

Xanana Gusmão was elected National Political Commissar (a post previously held by Mari Alkatiri in Mozambique), President of the CRRN and Commander-in-Chief of Falintil,101a Falintil which was no longer Fretilin’s but CRRN’s Armed wing. Abílio Araújo was appointed President of Fretilin and RDTL (the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste), which set up a rivalry between the two leaders. The act of detaching Falintil from Fretilin was soon rejected by Fretilin hardliners, and remains the source of many later conflicts between loyalists of President Gusmão and hard-line factions of Fretilin.102 That the hardliners at this point had a strong position may be deduced by the fact that Fretilin at this conference formally changed it’s name to Partido Marxista-Leninista Fretilin (PMLF).103 Gusmão increasingly found himself, as a Falintil commander, in opposition to the Fretilin’s Central Committee. From this time onwards, Xanana instead counted on a number of close collaborators such as Mau Hudo and Mau Hono as close collaborators along with those already loyal to him like Holy Natxa, Ko’o Susu, Konis Santana, Taur Matan Ruak and David Alex. However, another faction of military leaders coalesced around Chief-of-Staff appointed Kilik Wae Gae, and it appears from subsequent events that there were strategic and political issues on which the two groups did not agree.104

The networks linking the armed resistance with the population within the strategic camps usually worked through the traditional alliance system which ordered Timorese society. Customary practices and traditional beliefs remained strong amongst the people and the systems of marital alliances between the various language groups continued to maintain relations amongst those living in re-settlement camps. The resilience and strength of indigenous systems to re-constitute communities in face of adversity meant that they provided a significant contribution to the re-building of the new resistance.105

100 Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 74.
102 Rees, op. cit., p. 31.
103 Timor Archives. ‘Authenticating documents.’ Accessed at http://timorarchives.wordpress.com/2012/03/05/authentic1/
104 Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 73.
105 Ibid.
Audio-cassettes of Xanana’s messages in Portuguese or Tetun, began to circulate among Timorese communities both inside and outside East Timor. Fretilin abroad had them translated into English for international consumption. In Timor, the clandestine copying and passing of tapes was relatively safer than the use of photocopiers, which were monitored. The tapes also overcame the problem of illiteracy within East Timor.\(^{106}\)

From this time, killings and disappearances reported to have been committed by members of the resistance are also far lower than in the early years of the conflict, primarily during and after the inter-party conflicts known as “the civil war” and during the Fretilin intra-party purges of 1976 and 1977-78.\(^{107}\) Not only was the scale of reported killings by Falintil far lower than in 1976-79; the pattern was also very different from in the earlier period. The victims from now on tended not to be persons who were associated with the resistance, but individuals who were working with the Indonesians (sometimes against their will) and the random casualties of attacks.\(^{108}\)

Understanding the crucial role of the church and seeking to collaborate with other sections of society, Xanana also attempted to develop links with the Catholic Church. It was the only functioning institution in Timor that could provide international links and an effective cover for clandestine activities. After the National Conference in March 1981, Xanana hoped to meet with Monsignor Lopes, the Head of the Church, who he knew was sympathetic to the struggle.\(^{109}\)

**Support groups abroad – realignment and growth**

On the other side of the world, Portugal enjoyed a more stable political situation than in the previous years, and the Portuguese government in September 1980 proposed that consultations be held with a number of designated interested countries, such as Australia, Japan, China, the Netherlands and the United States. Indonesia would only agree to talks on the condition that Portugal first accept the integration of East Timor into Indonesia, and the other countries responded without any enthusiasm. However, the failed attempt inspired Indonesia to send a group of former operators of Operasi Komodo to Portugal, where they, unknown to the Portuguese authorities, met with some influential Timorese and Portuguese at the tourist resort Estoril.\(^{110}\)

More enthusiastic and decidedly less secretive, the People’s Permanent Tribunal met in Lisbon between June 19-21, 1981. The Permanent People’s Tribunal, established in 1979, was an Italian-based successor to the Bertrand Russel War Crimes Tribunal. It was founded on the principle of allowing ordinary citizens to air complaints of violations of human rights. The Lisbon session on East Timor was presided over by Prof. François Rigaux, Professor of International Law at Louvain University, Belgium. The Tribunal met in Lisbon as a response to an appeal by Fretilin’s external group, and was addressed by Abilio Araujo and Mari Alkatiri to judge

the crimes of the Indonesian fascist regime’s colonial-expansionism as well as US imperialism’s crimes against the people of East Timor (and) acknowledge the justness of the struggle of the Maubere people under the leadership of FRETILIN in defence of it’s country’s territorial integrity, in

\(^{106}\) Ibid, pp. 83-84.
\(^{107}\) CAVR 2005, op. cit., p. 55.
\(^{108}\) Ibid, p. 59.
\(^{109}\) Boavida, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
defence of the sovereignty of its independent state, the Democratic Republic of east Timor and to safeguard its national and cultural identity.111

Lawyers, anthropologists, diplomats, missionaries, journalists and others then presented evidence in public sessions, among them Ken Fry, Carmel Budiardjo, Noam Chomsky, James Dunn and Pat Walsh of ACFOA. Dr João Loff Barreto described to the Tribunal the position of the Portuguese government in the crucial twenty months between April 1974 and December 1975. Barreto’s report, entitled *Portugal in Timor: 20 Crucial Months (Portuguese Positions on East Timor: April 1974 —December 1975*. When it was first presented, Loff Barreto’s work was almost ignored by the Portuguese press, despite its dramatic revelations. Some months later a program shown on Portuguese television repeated the essential facts of his argument, and led to a public scandal. This, in turn, led to the release of the so-called ‘Timor dossier’, a 1000 – page report of a 1976-77 military inquiry into the withdrawal of the Portuguese administration from Timor during the civil war of August 1975. Since the report’s completion President Antonio Ramalho Eanes had exercised his power to forbid publication which he judged would have a divisive national impact after Portugal’s traumatic de-colonization. The controversy engendered by Loff Barreto’s paper and the following TV-program led the President to reconsider his decision and the dossier was released in October 1981.112 Barreto’s report was later reworked and released as a book, *The Timor Drama*, in 1983.

The international seminary on East Timor in 1979 and the permanent People’s tribunal in 1981 marked the beginnings of, in Brad Simpson’s words, “a truly transnational activism which proved crucial in maintaining East Timor’s visibility internationally between 1975-1991.”113 This activism on East Timor’s behalf broke the Indonesian side’s virtual monopoly on information – the reports by Nordland and other independent as cited herein were rare and far between - and also made more difficult for some states to support Indonesia diplomatically or militarily. In doing so, they complemented and strengthened East Timor’s civil resistance.114

114 Ibid., p. 454.
We have already seen how solidarity groups in Australia were crucial in keeping the awareness of the ‘East Timor question’ alive in that country, and in assisting with communications between the resistance in East Timor and those on the outside. During the late 1970’s/early 1980’s several European nations also witnessed the rise of East Timor solidarity groups. For obvious reasons Portugal was one of those countries. As in Australia, internal rivalry and conflicts within Fretilin had its impact on the solidarity movement also in Portugal. Initially, the Portugal-East Timor Friendship Association (AAPTL – Associacão de Amizade Portugal Timor-Leste) supported the view that the world at large should recognize the RDTL (República Democrática de Timor-Leste), as declared on November 28, 1975, and that Fretilin was the sole representative of the Timorese people. Coinciding with the Lisbon meeting of the Permanent People’s Tribunal, Barbedo de Magalhães and others set up a new organisation based on different assumptions.

Magalhães argued that as the Democratic Republic of East Timor was not recognized by the United Nations, it did not, for all practical reasons, exist. Also, to put focus on the recognition of independence would make it possible for Portugal to abandon its responsibilities as administering power – a tempting proposal for any Portuguese government. Magalhães proposed instead a strategy that East Timor be seen as a non-self governing territory, in accordance with the viewpoint taken by the United Nations. This, in turn, would make it possible to demand that Portugal assume its responsibilities as administering power, i.e. to work towards an act of self-determination in East Timor. Thus, the demand for recognition of DRET, the Democratic Republic of East Timor was, even if not formally revoked, ‘quietly put to one side.’

The other major difference was re the view of Fretilin as being representative of the Timorese people, which Magalhães saw as undemocratic, and a way to alienate both Western people and their governments. In Portugal, Fretilin had privileged contacts with pro-Chinese left wing parties, but even the main (Moscow-oriented) Communist party held them at arm’s length. To gain a much needed support of other parties, it would be necessary to abandon the

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idea of a single party representing the whole people. Thereby, it would perhaps be possible to treat the East Timor issue as a national Portuguese problem, and not a problem concerning only those on the far left.\textsuperscript{116}

Accordingly, the CDPM (Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere, Commission for the Rights of the Maubere people) was established, with the aim to campaign for the right to self-determination of the East Timorese. For many years led by Luisa Pereira, this became the main solidarity group in Portugal.\textsuperscript{117} Together with other groups, CDPM was to initiate and co-ordinate many European activities, including forthcoming annual European gatherings of support groups and preparations for the sessions at the UN Human Rights Committee.\textsuperscript{118}

Since the CDPM served as an intermediary between the East Timorese resistance and the outside world, the organisation was also crucial in its function as a source of information about developments in East Timor to important international fora, such as various UN agencies. Thus, during the 1980’s, the Portuguese solidarity movement was extremely important for the East Timorese struggle for self-determination, both in its function as an intermediary between the local resistance and the outside world, and as a hindrance for the Portuguese government from accepting any kind of deal with the Indonesian authorities, or abdicating its responsibilities as an administrative power.\textsuperscript{119} For one thing, the solidarity movement was largely responsible behind the creation in 1981 of a Parliamentary Commission on East Timor by the Portuguese Parliament.\textsuperscript{120}

That the ‘East Timor question’ was no longer only a matter for Fretilin and its left-wing supporters abroad, was further accentuated when exiled UDT members, at a meeting in Lisbon in 1979, created a political commission, with the aim to struggle politically for self-determination and independence for East Timor.

The reason behind this was that they considered UDT president Francisco Lopes da Cruz and other UDT leaders still in Timor, to be prisoners in the hands of the Indonesians. Moises da Costa Amaral was elected President of the commission, with Paulo Pires as Vice-President.\textsuperscript{121}

Several other European nations also saw the rise of East Timor solidarity groups. Some of those groups, for instance the Dutch Indonesia Committee and TAPOL (based in England) were already campaigning against the Suharto dictatorship\textsuperscript{122}, and now also included East Timor on their agenda. TAPOL (the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign), had been founded by ex-political prisoner Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, and the \textit{TAPOL Bulletin} became a must-read for all those interested in Indonesia/East Timor because of its access to non-official and alternative Indonesian sources.\textsuperscript{123}

Professor John Taylor from South Bank University in London founded BCIET, the British Campaign for an Independent East Timor, an early offspring of Denis Freney’s CIET in Australia.\textsuperscript{124} BCIET worked closely with TAPOL and was a leading support group in the UK

\textsuperscript{116} Magalhães & Liong, op. cit., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{117} In spite of their different approaches, both AAPTL and CDPM grew out of CIDAC (Centro de Informação e Documentação Anti-Colonial, Anti-colonial Center for Documentation and Information), an organization that was founded in September 1974 to promote decolonization in all of Portugal’s overseas territorial possessions.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{119} de Sousa Santos & Arriscado Nunes, op. cit., pp. 203-204.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, pp. 208-209.
\textsuperscript{122} TAPOL was set up in 1973 to disseminate information about human rights violations in Indonesia, focusing then primarily on political prisoners. TAPOL is an abbreviation of \textit{tahanan politik}, with the meaning of ‘political prisoner’ in Bahasa.
\textsuperscript{123} Simpson, op. cit., p. 456.
\textsuperscript{124} Magalhães & Liong, op. cit., p. 8.
until it became defunct in 1979.\textsuperscript{125} Also from England was the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), which went on to publish many publications on East Timor, including the journal \textit{Timor Link}. The latter organisation, in co-operation with the Netherlands Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, subsequently established the Christian Consultation on East Timor, an important annual forum for church based support for East Timor.

In France, ASTO (\textit{Association de Solidarité Avec Timor-Oriental}) was set up by Michel Robert, and in Sweden Östtimorkommittén was founded at a very early stage.\textsuperscript{126} In Denmark Torben Retbøll of IWGIA (the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs) made an important early contribution towards ‘spreading the word’ through his informative \textit{East Timor and the Western Democracies} (1980), and in Germany Klemens Ludwig and the Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker (the Society for Threatened Peoples filled a similar role. Some of these solidarity groups – the list above is far from complete – were short-lived, others had a great longevity. And solidarity groups in civil society were not confined to Australia and Europa. Asia’s first solidarity group was started in Japan in 1981 by women in Hiroshima, led by Jean Inglis. The group published a Japanese-language newsletter devoted to self-determination for Timor-Leste called \textit{Higashi Chimoru Tsuchin} (East Timor Newsletter).\textsuperscript{127} From this beginning, a number of solidarity groups were established in Japan, largely as a result of the works of activists such as Aki Matsuno and Kiyoko Fukusawa. The solidarity groups jointly brought José Ramos-Horta to Japan in 1985 and Dom Martinho da Costa Lopes the following year and were also influential behind the establishing in 1987 of the Diet Members Forum on East Timor, led by parliamentarian Satsuki Eda.\textsuperscript{128}

In the United States, East Timor remained – even more so than in Europe – an obscure marginal subject, of concern only to very few scholars (such as Noam Chomsky, Benedict Anderson and Roger Clark – the latter a New Zealander teaching at the Rutgers University), Catholic Church - and human rights activists – notably so Arnold Kohen, who in late 1975 had been impressed by José Ramos Horta’s appearance at the UN - , and journalists.\textsuperscript{129} Kohen and Richard Francke formed an East Timor Defence Committee, whose members could be counted on the fingers of one hand.\textsuperscript{130} That, however, was to change fast and radically after 1991, as we will see presently. When activism in the US gained ground and then spread like wildfire from 1991 onwards, this built to a large extent upon the earlier work of the Canadian group (even to the degree of borrowing its name) ETAN, the East Timor Alert Network, set up in 1986 on the initiative of Elaine Briére, the person behind the ground-breaking photographs from East Timor taken in 1974, to co-ordinate the solidarity work for East Timor in Canada.\textsuperscript{131} As noted by Amanda Wise:

There are two striking features about the East Timorese diaspora: the extent to which the collective fight to free East Timor from Indonesian occupation has figured in their collective imagination, and the number of symbiotic political alliances developed with the “outside.”\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{125} CAVR, Chapter 7, 'Self-determination', 2006, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{127} CAVR, Chapter 7, “Self-determination”, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid, pp. 101-105.
\textsuperscript{129} Simpson, op. cit., p. 456.
\textsuperscript{131} CAVR, op. cit., p. 107.
‘Fence of legs’

From the early 1980s the Indonesian authorities introduced new forms of displacement. These were related to two separate developments. The first was the decision to dismantle or scale down the resettlement camps that had been established to accommodate the population that had surrendered in the late 1970s. The second was the reorganisation of the resistance as a guerrilla force capable of launching localised attacks on ABRI. For many of those moved, their transfer from resettlement camps to strategic villages, new villages and even back to their own villages did not substantially improve their lot. Restrictions on freedom of movement continued to have a serious impact on food production and thus on people’s well-being. Another important factor, soon to be elaborated upon, was that the Indonesian administration in 1981 tried to force the Church to accept linguistic ‘integrasi’ by stipulating that Portuguese should no longer be used during Mass and should be replaced by Bahasa. The clergy rejected this request and asked the Vatican for permission for Portuguese to be replaced by Tetun. The Vatican gave its approval in October 1981. This change was a move which helped integrate the Church more closely with the community. In strictly military terms, the Indonesian army responded swiftly and brutally when they realised that the armed resistance had been revived. In the Viqueque district, all males over nine years old were rounded up for a campaign to capture guerrillas, the Operasi Keamanan, Security Operation, better-known as the ‘fence of legs’ campaign (but also known as Operasi Kikis (final cleansing). The men and boys were ordered into the mountains to help the army conduct a giant sweep designed to finish off the armed resistance once and for all. The civilians, mostly armed with sticks and farm implements, formed human chains and encircled the rugged mountains where the guerrillas were believed to be hiding. Army troops moved ahead of them, theoretically to beat their quarry into this human net.

Many of those caught in the net were civilians who up until then had resisted government attempts to make them move to resettlement centres. The operation lasted between June and September 1981, and at least 1,000 civilians died. At Lacluta, south-east of Dili, as many as 500 people were killed in September 1981 in one of the worst massacres of the Indonesian occupation

Cristiano da Costa told his story to Michele Turner in Australia in 1990:

The Hotel Flamboyant in Baucau was the military command centre in 1981 for the ‘Fence of Legs’ operation … It started from all parts of East Timor, all driving towards Aitana, near Lakluta, that was to be the middle of the circle. The front line was Timorese forced to take part. When the circle was small enough, the army bombarded the area, then soldiers went in to finish off any people left there.

One week I was forced to go with a group of soldiers to do a final clean-up, find anything left … We smelt the bodies before we found them. The heads had been cut off the first bodies, one woman and four men, on the ground together. The woman wore a black dress, the men trousers and shirt. The bodies were swollen and the clothes split. It was not possible to say how they died. The heads were still on the other bodies I saw. We found three men hanging upside down in trees. Their faces looked beaten and it looked like knife wounds to their stomachs. On the ground beside them were six others, two women and two children and an old man and an old
The East Timorese church reacts

Dom Martinho, appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Dili diocese in 1977, was far from being a radical person. Like his former boss, Bishop Ribeiro, he had been prepared to accept the Indonesians had they behaved decently. He tried to work quietly with the Indonesian military for more than five years to persuade them to treat the people of East Timor with respect. Finally he concluded that this approach had been all but fruitless, and on October 13, 1981, the day commemorating Our Lady of Fatima, he made a speech in front of 12,000 people outside his church in Dili where he condemned the atrocities, albeit cautiously, without naming Indonesia directly. As a result, he received a number of death threats. He later became more blunt. On November 19, 1981, he wrote in a letter to a friend in Australia:

The news from Timor is quite bad. However, it is necessary to have the courage to receive it, considering that it is based on the truth. With the military operation that took place in July, August and September, it seems as if a cyclone had swept Timor from end to end, leaving the island in a true tragedy: the death of lucent children of two to three years of age, pregnant women and defenceless people massacred only because they don’t want to lose their identity among the nations of the world. Approximately 500 people were accused and killed without hesitation or pity, exclusively for the crime of not wanting to integrate into the Republic of Indonesia, preferring above all to be slaves in their own independence to being well-off under the paw of others. After all this we come to the conclusion that the military operation undertaken by Indonesia in Timor not only did not produce the desired effect, it was actually counterproductive. The question of Timor cannot be resolved by shooting, only through dialogue.

Ataúro

Reports that the Indonesian authorities were transporting people to the nearby island Ataúro began in mid-1980, when an unknown number of people were sent there for alleged involvement in the above-mentioned guerrilla raid on a broadcasting station and a military barracks on 10 June 1980. For those people, who constituted the first group of people to be sent to Ataúro since the invasion, conditions were particularly harsh and it is known that many of them died on the island.

Amnesty International received further reports of several hundred more Timorese being transported to Ataúro between December 1980 and April 1981 from the district of Los Palos.

138 Turner, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
139 Our Lady of Fatima is the patroness of the local (and Portuguese) church to whom many East Timorese have a great devotion.
140 Kohen, op. cit., p. 139
141 Kohen, op. cit., pp. 139-40
142 CAVR 2005, op. cit., p. 66.
Baucau and Liquicaq. They were reportedly civilians suspected of sympathizing with Fretilin rather than of being active guerrillas. The majority of those sent to Ataúro were women, children and old people. With the men killed, imprisoned, or in the mountains with Fretilin, women in Ataúro - as in many other places in East Timor at the time - became single parents and de facto heads of families or village groups, thereby challenging age-old patterns of gender roles. Between June and September 1981 more than 3,400 people were taken to Ataúro from districts throughout the territory in connection with the military operation known as Operation Security. Indonesian authorities acknowledged that the reason they were being held there was that they were related to guerrillas. The conditions facing people sent to Ataúro in 1980 and 1981 were deplorable. At that time detainees were being provided with a weekly food ration of only one small can of maize, which they were supposed to supplement by what they could grow themselves. The infertility of the island and the kinds of people held there made food production extremely difficult and most detainees were forced to forage for leaves, roots and other edible matter. In December 1981, the Red Cross was allowed to re-enter East Timor, and began in February 1982 an emergency feeding and medical-care programme on Ataúro, after 176 internees had died in an outbreak of contagious disease.

Visitors with conflicting views

One month later, in March 1982, the Indonesian authorities invited former Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam to East Timor, for a three day visit organised by CSIS (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, cf. ch. 9.) Whitlam was accompanied by the pro-integrationist foreign editor of Sydney Morning Herald, Peter Hastings. During the trip, Whitlam got involved in a brawl with Apostolic Administrator da Costa Lopes, who had informed the outside world of massacres committed in East Timor, and had recently warned of an impending famine situation. The Melbourne Age reported on 6 March 1982 that Whitlam re the Bishop’s warning had said that, “I cannot understand why he perpetrated this wicked act and sent this cruel letter.” In the Indonesian newspaper Suara Karya (also on 6 march 1982) Whitlam presented a picture of an East Timor secure under Indonesian control, and with much visible signs of development, from new public buildings to irrigation projects; dismissing allegations of poverty put forth by Australian voluntary agencies and presented in Australian press. The Vatican followed suit, when its Secretary of State Cardinal Casaroli, in a communication to the Australian Bishops criticised Monsignor Lopes for exaggerating the food situation, and asked that the question of East Timor be treated with prudence and discretion.

Some months later, in May 1982 Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Red Nordland was allowed an eleven-day visit to East Timor, including Ataúro. According to Nordland, the Indonesian authorities called Ataúro a ‘rehabilitation camp’. ‘It is for their own good, and they like to be here’, Colonel Kalangi, Sekwilda (secretary of the territorial region, ‘his modest title as East Timor provincial secretary’) and de facto ruler of East Timor at the time, told Nordland. Kalangi acknowledged that some residents of the camp were not pleased to be there, ‘but maybe some of those who are in the mountains will feel their family is unhappy.
so they will come down. It is a positive system. And if they don’t come down, the prisoners of Ataúro Island will stay where they are.'

Despite close monitoring by Indonesian officials, Nordland – quite unlike Whitlam - saw signs of large-scale malnutrition and disease, and of overt oppression. Dozens of Timorese, though fearful to approach Nordland, used the opportunity to ask him to ‘please tell the world so they can help the Timorese people.’ According to Nordland, the population widely regarded the Indonesians as a foreign occupying force. There were virtually no civil liberties. No one was allowed to leave his village or home town without permission. Telephone calls and telegrams to places outside East Timor were forbidden. The Sekwilda boasted to Nordland about the government’s far-reaching settlement policy.

Since integration 150 new settlement centres had been built and 50 more were planned. People had been moved from the mountains to the resettlement villages, Kalangi said, to make it easier to control them and to provide food, education and other amenities. ‘It is the new Indonesian civilisation we are bringing ... and it is not easy to civilise the backward peoples.’

Elections, paramilitary groups and continued violence

The May 1982 Indonesian general election was used in an attempt to prove that the East Timorese were happy with the “integrasi” with Indonesia. The official returns for East Timor, claiming that 99% of the votes were said to be for Golkar certainly pointed in that direction. Neobere, a Timorese refugee who left Dili for Lisbon at the beginning of 1983, described the election in his village thus, including an explanation for Golkar’s one missing per cent of the votes:

Long before polling day, the government sent military officers out to all areas to tell people that they had to take part in the election and that they must vote for Golkar, not for either of the other parties. I myself attended such a meeting where a soldier told us how we must vote. We were told that if we didn’t vote, we would be branded as Fretilin. This meant voting was compulsory. So our people thought: well, if we have to vote, we shall try to do it not in the way they want, so as not to give the impression that they have the support of the Timorese. But the point is that people felt that they had to vote; otherwise they would be killed. At the polling stations, there were three ballot boxes, one for each of the parties. The Golkar box was in the middle (No. 2) and the PPP and PDI boxes were on each side. In front of where the polling booth was there was a small hall with military police on guard. The three boxes were concealed behind a curtain but the curtain didn’t come down to the floor, only to knee height, so the guard could see by watching people’s feet which box they went to. People knew what was happening, so they tried to keep their feet in front of the middle box but put their voting slip into one of the other boxes.

Despite the impressive number of Timorese who, rather unsurprisingly, voted for Golkar and integrasi, the resistance continued, as did the violence from the Indonesian side. The East Timorese resistance was not alone in their wish to involve the civilian population in the struggle. The Indonesian military attempted to do exactly the same thing when they increased...
the involvement of Timorese auxiliary forces from the late 1970’s/early 1980s. In the preceding chapter I described how two battalions with partly Timorese soldiers were created, plus the hamlet-based civilian organisations Hansip and Ratih, the latter functioning to control every-day life of the population. To these groups were now added paramilitary groups which were closely linked to Kopassandha (Komando Pasukan Sandi Yudha, the Army Special Warfare Command, formerly Kesko TT and RPKAD, still ‘nicknamed’ Baret Merah, the Red Berets.)

ABRI recruited several teams with colourful names such as Tim Nuklir (Nuclear Team) based in Lautém, Tim Morok (the Wild Team) in Manatuto, and Tim Railakan (Lightning Team) in Baucau – to arrest, interrogate and torture suspected resistance members and to take part in operations to search out and attack Falintil groups.\(^\text{154}\) In early 1982, members of Railakan killed eight Falintil soldiers and captured another thirty-two; later in that year they killed nine more.\(^\text{155}\) This established a tradition of close relations between ABRI and East Timor paramilitary units which were often sustained throughout the years of the conflict.\(^\text{156}\) They (and later created similar groups) were also to play an important and sinister role during the period before and after the referendum in 1999.\(^\text{157}\)

After Falintil attacks on Indonesian posts in Mauchiga and Rotuto in the area of Mount Kablaki in August 1982, Indonesian troops detained hundreds of men and women from Mauchiga and the surrounding communities. More than 50 people from the village of Mauchiga alone were executed or disappeared in the following months. Many of them were killed in the most brutal fashion, both publicly and at an execution site, called Jakarta 2, near the town of Ainaro, where victims were hurled into a deep ravine. Others were raped, and some 600 people from the area were forcibly displaced to Ataúro island and other locations where many of them died of deprivation.\(^\text{158}\)

In that same month, Xanana Gusmão managed to have a meeting with Monsignor da Costa Lopes, secretly arranged by the liurai of Mehara, Miguel Santos and Father Locatelli, an Italian Salesian priest based at Fatumaca. During their talk, Monsignor Lopes agreed to help the resistance, and accepted the conference papers from Xanana. Both the co-operation with the church, the slowly improving communications between East Timorese in the resistance and those abroad plus the involvement of civil society groups can said to be symbolised by this meeting. When the messages did reach Lisbon in May 1983 (!) they would be the first official resistance messages to reach the outside world since the radio had been surrendered in 1978. These details of the new resistance were to make a great impact in small circles around the globe.\(^\text{159}\)

A ‘face-lift’ in East Timor’s administration

Shortly after, on 18 September 1982, a new Governor of East Timor was appointed. This reflected Indonesia’s determination to have the integration accepted by the international community, now that the strictly military victory was seen as largely won. The first two men to occupy the post were both from the pro-integrationist Apodeti party. Arnaldo Dos Reis

\(^{154}\) CAVR, 2006, op. cit., p. 21.
\(^{155}\) Kiernan, op. cit., p. 131.
\(^{156}\) Ibid, p. 22.
\(^{158}\) CAVR 2005, op. cit., p. 66.
\(^{159}\) Niner 2009, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
Araújo was the first Governor. His downfall came after he boasted – at the UN General Assembly - about his collaborationist role during the Japanese occupation of East Timor. He was succeeded by Guilherme Goncalves, whose rise and fall was closely linked with coffee. His short reign ended when he became embroiled in a bitter conflict with the Sekwilda, Colonel Kalangi over the share-out of coffee levies paid to the provincial government. Each man wanted to use the funds as patronage payouts and for personal gain. The Sekwilda had the power and Goncalves was sacked in 1982.

By this time, Apodeti had lost its relevance to the military rulers, and they turned their attention to the UDT. Mário Carrascalão, one of the three brothers in the most prominent coffee plantation family in the country, was chosen as the next Governor. During the time he spent abroad after 1975, promoting the idea of ‘integration’ as a member of Indonesia’s permanent mission to the UN, he seriously considered defecting and discussed this with his brother-in-law, Jose Ramos Horta, Fretilin’s permanent representative to the UN, but in May 1980, the family’s extensive land-holdings were restored to his brother Manuel, which must have made defection far less attractive. His long experience of dealing with UN diplomats was an important asset in a period when Indonesia needed above all else to win international opinion to its side. Moreover, it was a time when the development image had become an important part of international strategy and when security in East Timor was directed towards a ‘hearts and minds’ policy. This required a Timorese figurehead of a superior calibre than the previous Governors; a man with bureaucratic and technocratic training who could speak with conviction to foreign visitors about Indonesia’s development plans, and who could, when the time came, negotiate with the resistance movement.\textsuperscript{160} Since Carrascalão’s appointment as Governor, Kalangi tended to take a back seat when foreign visitors come to the territory, as Carrascalão provided the military establishment in East Timor with an acceptable Timorese image, concealing the truth of Indonesian brutality and exploitation.\textsuperscript{161}

On 23 September 1982, one week after the appointment of Mário Carrascalão, a group of foreign diplomats was invited by Indonesia for a three day visit to Timor. Among this group, with diplomats from Australia, Switzerland and Venezuela, was Görel Bogärde, the Under-Secretary of the Swedish Embassy in Jakarta. The report from Bogärde was classified as secret by the Swedish Department of Foreign Affairs. On 2 October 1996 the Swedish Foreign Department, after some months of correspondence, let me have a copy of the report, now declassified.

In the report Bogärde writes of a courtesy visit to the new Governor (Kalangi is mentioned as Carrascalão’s secretary), during which Carrascalão enthusiastically, ‘even with passion’, explained the background to the integration. He gave the number of the resistance as being about 300-400 people, about 100 of them armed, and the rest being ‘hostages’. The guerrillas had no contact with the outside world, according to Carrascalão. Bogärde wrote that it was hard not agree with the Governor that the end of resistance ‘is just a matter of time’.\textsuperscript{162} The first day was spent in Dili, socialising

\textsuperscript{160} Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, p.100.
\textsuperscript{162} The present author assumes that the Bogärde report is the basis for a statement made by Olof Palme, the then Prime Minister of Sweden, on 12 December 1982. He then said that ‘according to reliable information there is now no fighting in East Timor’ (Björn Larsson, Det grymma spelet. Stockholm: Östtimorkommittén, 1985, p. 34). To establish East Timor as peaceful was crucial, as the Swedish Government’s export of arms to Indonesia (up from a mere 1, 1 million Crowns in 1977 to 85, 8 million in 1982) was in danger of being considered in breach of the Swedish law on export of arms. According to this law, permits shall not be granted for export to: (1) Any state in international conflict with another state, regardless of whether there has been a formal declaration of war; (2) Any state involved in international conflict that can escalate into armed conflict, or; (3) Any state with internal armed conflicts. To these three points were later added the amendment that ‘there are strong foreign policy reasons that say that Sweden should not export arms, that can be used to suppress human rights’ (Ibid, p. 31). On 5 December 1978 the Liberal Party Foreign Minister Hans Blix said in defence of the
with Carrascalão and his wife. During the morning of the second day the delegation was flown by helicopter to Maliana, near the border of West Timor, where they visited a hospital, a clinic and an irrigation project. Before lunch back in Dili they visited Ataúro, where they saw signs of malnutrition, but not of starvation. On the third day the group visited schools and a hospital in Dili before lunch, and after lunch they returned to Jakarta. The Bogärde report may have been deemed controversial enough to be classified in 1982, but today its interest lies mainly in that it gives a good glimpse into how foreign diplomats were treated to well-planned, and, as time progressed, well-rehearsed trips to government-controlled places in East Timor.

**At the UN – support and sell-outs**

During the early 1980s Indonesia was trying hard to get East Timor off the UN agenda, and almost succeeded (the invitations to foreign diplomats to visit East Timor for controlled tours were a part of this scheme). The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council had in a number of resolutions (12 December 1975, 22 December 1975, 22 April 1976, 1 December 1976, 28 November 1977, 13 December 1978, 21 November 1979, 11 November 1980, and 24 November 1981) condemned the invasion, asked Indonesia to withdraw its military, and asked for full implementation of self-determination.

For many governments, the reluctance of Portugal, the former colonial power, to muster support in the early post-invasion years, the unwillingness of a major regional power, Australia, to take up the issue and the determined stand by the US delegations in favour of integration meant that it was not worth supporting the issue of self-determination. As a general rule, the governments of the industrialized states (France, Germany, the United Kingdom) abstained. Sweden’s voting pattern (fairly typical for European countries) was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>72 (Sweden)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>68 (Sweden)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
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<td>1981</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>45 (Sweden)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50 (Sweden)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


arms exports to Indonesia, which were then beginning to increase: ‘The law that forbids export of arms is applicable when a country is at war against another country. Indonesia is not at war, because Sweden does not recognise East Timor as an independent nation. The law is also applicable when a country has internal conflicts. Indonesia has no internal conflicts, because Sweden does not recognise the Indonesian annexation of East Timor. Finally, the law can be applied if the arms can be assumed to be used to suppress human rights. We have no evidence that the exported arms are used in East Timor. Finally, the arms are of a defensive nature’ (Ibid, p. 33). Canada showed a similar ingenuity in finding loopholes in its strict laws which forbid export of arms to countries involved in armed conflict.
As you can see, Sweden, under a Social Democratic government, supported East Timor in the yearly UN vote from 1975 to 1979. Meanwhile, export of arms to Indonesia increased rapidly from 1977 onwards. In 1980, Sweden abstained in the UN, and asked to join the IGGI (cf. ch. 8.) The following year, when the same thing happened in the UN and Sweden joined IGGI as an observer, the Social Democrats (then in opposition) protested strongly. But when the Social Democrats came back in government in 1982, they too abstained in the UN and did not pull out of the IGGI. Minster for Foreign Trade Mats Hellström, who publicly supported self-determination at the International East Timor conference held in Lisbon in May 1979, has now turned his talents to explaining the wisdom of the current Swedish policy. I think it was wrong to start an arms export to Indonesia as the liberal government did,” Hellström told a public meeting 1 November 1984. “But now we are tied by our contracts and have to complete deliveries. The contracts mean that the Swedish government must supply spare parts and replace weapons.”

In similar fashion François Mitterand, as leader of the French Socialist party, in strong words condemned the Conservative government, led by Giscard d’Estaing, on the East Timor question. As noted above, France was supplying the Indonesian armed forces with attack helicopters ahead of, and during, the mass killings in 1978-1979. After winning the elections in 1981, the Socialist government, under Mitterand, continued the policy of the previous government and even failed (as did Sweden) to support the UN General Assembly resolution in 1982, which called merely for the Secretary-General to try and find a solution through dialogue.

Many African, Asian and Latin American states voted with Indonesia, with the Islamic bloc being particularly influential. The Soviet Union voted for Indonesian withdrawal, but, in the early years of the 1980’s several eastern European governments broke ranks and moved to an abstentionist vote. Early Chinese support for East Timor faded rapidly in the late 1970s. As one would expect, many small states, ranging from Costa Rica to Iceland, tended to support independence. The strongest advocates of independence were the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Principé, together with Zimbabwe, Algeria, Benin and Vanuatu.

As for Indonesia’s immediate neighbours in South East Asia, the countries of the ASEAN alliance, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore, have with one exception voted solidly in favour of Indonesia. Singapore was the exception which cast its vote with the abstentions in December 1975, then failed to vote in 1976, but has supported Indonesia ever since.

163 Member countries of the IGGI provided Indonesia with 12.8 billion dollar in aid between the years 1965-1985. The purpose of this was to protect foreign investments of 9.6 billion dollar during the same period. All members of IGGI supported Indonesia by voting no or abstaining to vote during the yearly vote on East Timor at the UN. (Larsson, op. cit., p. 71).


166 Taylor 1991, op. cit., p.177

167 Of all the ASEAN members, Malaysia has gone out of its way to help Indonesia in its aggressive designs on East Timor. When UDT leaders were under strong pressure from Jakarta in mid-1975 to launch a strike against Fretilin, a member of the Malaysian Government added that ASEAN countries would not accept the emergence of an independent state under leftwing domination in the region. Malaysia has also acted as the conduit for arms supplies to Indonesia in order to conceal the true origin of the equipment in question. The first occasion was in September 1975, when Indonesian troops were mounting operations against East Timor along the border with West Timor. The CIA’s National Intelligence Daily reported on 26 September 1975 that:

Vastly increased Indonesian involvement is now proposed; special troops armed with weapons that cannot be traced to Jakarta will be used. Malaysia has reportedly agreed in principle to supply such weapons (Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., 14)
since. Indonesia also always received staunch diplomatic and moral support from India and Japan.\textsuperscript{168}

In 1982, faced with Indonesia’s most vigorous campaign so far to win international support for integration, President Antonio Ramalho Eanes and Prime Minister Pinto Balsemão agreed to a new and much more vigorous initiative designed to win support for self-determination in East Timor. On June 10, they asked all Portuguese ambassadors to raise the issue and link East Timor with other issues at the UN and called for a ‘common front’ with all Portuguese-speaking nations on the issue.\textsuperscript{169} A number of envoys were sent to Western European and other countries. On Oct. 1 1982, Addressing the UN general Assembly, Portuguese prime Minister Pinto Balsemão described the East Timor conflict as the ‘main priority’ of Portuguese foreign policy campaign. As James Dunn points out, the increased visibility of the ‘East Timor question’ may have been responsible for preventing the issue from being removed from the agenda of the General Assembly.\textsuperscript{170}

At least, all this activity may have gone to explaining that just five days after Balsemão’s appearance at the UN, sixteen US Senators called for an inquiry into East Timor.\textsuperscript{171} This, in its turn, happened just six days ahead of a visit by Suharto to the United States, obviously with a purpose of getting East Timor once and for all removed from the UN agenda. He was met by a very sympathetic Ronald Reagan.

At the arrival ceremony on 12 October 1982, Reagan assured Suharto that:

\begin{quote}
Your views on world affairs carry special authority and add special meaning to our discussions today. Your viewpoints and wise counsel will be greatly appreciated.” He further added that “I know of the great strides made by Indonesia in nation building under your leadership,” adding that “no nation in our era has shown itself more firmly committed to preserving its own independence than Indonesia, and yet, no nation has pursued that goal in a more responsible manner … the United States regards Indonesia as an important force for peace, stability, and progress.”
\end{quote}

Shortly thereafter, in November 1982, Australia’s former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam once again backed up the Indonesian side, when he offered evidence on East Timor to the UN Decolonisation Committee to support his case why East Timor should be removed from the UN agenda.

For instance, he rejected Fretilin’s claims to be represented at the UN because, unlike Frelimo in Mozambique, they never fired a shot in anger against Portugal.\textsuperscript{173} Whitlam was not, however, the only Australian politician to address the Committee. Gordon McIntosh, a Senator from Western Australia, brought with him not only a letter where the great majority of Australian Labor Party members of parliament affirmed their support for the Timorese people’s right to self-determination, but also a tape, extracted from Greg Schackleton’s last film, brought to Dili by José Ramos Horta, where he pleaded to the United Nations to care. When he played it to the Committee, the room fell silent.\textsuperscript{174}

On 23 November 1982, a resolution (37/30 1982) was accepted which requested the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned, with an intention of exploring avenues for achieving a just and comprehensive settlement of the problem, and to provide a report to the General Assembly the following year. When, at the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{168}{Dunn, 1983, op. cit., p. 363.}
\footnotetext{169}{Taylor 1990, op. cit., p. 34.}
\footnotetext{170}{Ibid, pp. 372-373.}
\footnotetext{171}{Taylor 1990, op. cit., p. 35}
\footnotetext{172}{Retboll, op. cit., p. 31.}
\footnotetext{173}{Gunn, op. cit., p. 145.}
\footnotetext{174}{Horta, 1987, op. cit., p.131.}
\end{footnotes}
UN’s thirty-eighth session in 1983, the Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar, did not submit an East Timor report, Norway’s UN Ambassador proposed that debate on the item should be postponed until 1984. The proposal was based on his soundings of the concerned parties and on the Secretary-General’s decision not to report on East Timor because of unspecified ‘recent developments’.175 On 23 September 1983 the General Assembly ratified Norway’s proposal.176

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the UN general-Secretary at the time, interpreted the resolution’s call to “initiate consultations with all parties directly involved” to include only Portugal and Indonesia, and not Fretilin. The resulting talks achieved little, focusing exclusively on “humanitarian issues” while failing to address fundamental matters, particularly self-determination.177 So, for many years, the issue lay dormant at the UN, with none of the sides willing to risk a new vote. The situation was a stalemate, with both sides waiting (and acting) for the pre-conditions of the game to change. Little did they know that the basic pre-conditions were not to change until 1989.

Manuals of surveillance and torture

On the ground in East Timor, Falintil forces on 31 December 1982, captured a set of nine documents giving instructions to Indonesian troops on how to deal with the resistance, labelled as GPK (Gerakan pangacau keamanan, Security threatening elements). Some of the documents were issued by Colonel Sahala Rajagukguk, the commander of Indonesian troops in East Timor, and some by Major Willem da Costa, the officer in charge of intelligence operations. The folder was the property of the Baucau/1628-06 District Military Command (Kodim 1628/06 Baucau). All these instructions were issued in the second half of 1982.178

Those appearing over da Costa’s name were either Instruction Manuals or a training plan. Rajagukguk’s name appeared over three sets of Protap (Prosedur Tetap, Established procedures).179 One of those sets out instructions for territorial Intelligence activities in East Timor. The instructions are directed at the Military District Commands (Koramil) and the Village Guidance Teams (Tim Pembina Desa) and Village Guidance NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officer (Babinsa)).180 The instructions emphasize that control over all aspects of the life of the community is the key in efforts to separate the GPK from the people. To achieve this, a number of specified aims have to be achieved. Some of those are:

- Every change occurring within the community is known. To achieve this, every official must be sensitive to his environment
- every time an inhabitant goes out of the area, the direction, destination, time and reason are known.
- any time that goods that could be used as logistics for the guerrillas are shifted to or from the area to places suspected as GPK areas, information of this is

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175 In July 1984 de Cuellar made a statement at the UN, where he detailed a number of talks he and Under-Secretary-General Rafeeuddin Ahmed had held with Indonesian and Portuguese representatives. These contacts were the ‘recent developments’ which had led the Secretary-general not to consider it opportune to submit a report to the General Assembly the year before.

176 IWGIA 1984:198


178 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 169.


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Speedily available and preventive action is taken.

- No inhabitant’s home is being used as a hideout for the GPK, with periodic checks being made.181

Instruction manual No. JUKNIS/01/X!/1981, explains that in order to know a village well, it is essential to have data and notes, kept by the Babinsa, on events within the village. These include:

- Sketch map of the old village (pre-upheaval).
- Sketch map of the present village.
- Village security system
- Genealogy of the chieftain
- List of village government officials
- List of catechists.
- List of other community figures.182

The instructions also state that it is important to appoint reliable people as Katuas (elders), and that each has responsibility for 10-15 families. Each katua must be able to know exactly the activities of the families under his guidance; for example, when they go into their field, go to collect wood, get permission to go to another village, to tend flocks, go to market, and so on. To accomplish this, it is important to appoint an ‘informer’ in each of these groups of 10-15 families. Other ways to control the villages are:

- Every time anyone goes out of the village, he/she must have a travel pass, and every person who comes into the village from another village must report.
- Inspection posts must be set up to keep a check on everyone who enters or leaves the village
- Maintain an element of surprise by holding extraordinary roll-calls, or by having check-ups on the population by the katuas, to check whether anyone has left the village without permission or whether anyone has arrived from another village without permission or whether anyone has arrived from another village without reporting.
- Take other actions, according to the circumstances in each village, for the purpose of intensifying control over the population. For instance, house-to-house visits, and patrols inside the village to prevent illegal meetings from taking place there.183

One of the manuals is an Established Procedure for the Interrogation of Prisoners. The recommended procedure here is to avoid violence — but only up to a point:

It is hoped that interrogation with the use of force will not be implemented except in those situations where the person examined tells the truth with difficulty (is evasive.) However, if the use of force is required a member of the local population … should not be present to witness it, in order to avoid arousing the antipathy of the people.184

182 Ibid, p. 244.
183 Ibid, p. 245.
Thus, even the remotest corner of the smallest villages were, at least in theory, linked by a surveillance network to the next level within the *dwi-fungsi* system, and ultimately to the top levels of military and civilian administration, leading to, in Vatikiotis’ words, “an extraordinarily close mesh of control.”185 If to this close mesh of control is then added an approved use of violence, with impunity for the perpetrators, it is really a wonder that any resistance at all managed to continue during this period.

**Talks and cease-fire**

Notwithstanding the overwhelming power of the Indonesian armed forces and the tight control of the population in the resettlement villages, the resistance movement strengthened its position so much so that formal negotiations between it and the Indonesian military took place. The complex mechanisms and political manoeuvring behind the cease-fire were roughly as follows: By the end of January 1983, local Korem commander Gatut Purwanto contacted – through a local liurai – and subsequently met with, two Fretilin leaders of the eastern section for preliminary discussions. It seems that Purwanto in doing this acted in line with instructions from Defence Minister General Yusuf, who was taking a softer line on the conflict. Yusuf apparently saw a continued war in East Timor as a pointless and wasteful effort, and advocated instead some sort of autonomy within Indonesia for its ‘27th province’ a prospect to be won through a ‘hearts and minds’ campaign rather than by sheer military force.

The initial meeting, held near Los Palos, was soon followed by a number of local preparatory meetings, involving an increasing number of attendants. Xanana Gusmão responded to the Indonesian initiative by agreeing to a period of “peaceful contact” (*kontak damai* in Bahasa). In late March, discussions were elevated to province level, now at a Fretilin encampment at Bibileu. For the first time, Xanana Gusmão was present, as was Kopassus major Stefanus Gatot and Salesian priest, Father Locatelli, of Fatumaca. This meeting was soon followed by another, on March 20 at Bubu Rake in northwest Viqueque district. A couple of days later, on March 23, and again at Bubu Rake, Xanana Gusmão and his delegation met with the Indonesian representatives Major Iswanto, Major Stefanus Gatot and Colonel Purwanto. In concurrence with this, but separately, Gusmão met with East Timorese Governor Mario Carrascalão, who was flown in by helicopter from Dili on Colonel Purwanto’s insistence, as he himself “had run out of arguments” in his discussions with Xanana.186 This time, the meeting concluded with a formal and territory-wide cease-fire.

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185 Ibid, p. 225
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The negotiations between the two sides effectively meant the abandonment of the Fretilin policy of rejecting any compromise solution, the “no negotiations - ever” stance, as declared at the Fretilin conferences at Soibada in 1976 and Laline in 1977. Understandably, there were objections to this within Falintil, which ultimately resulted in internal conflict. One wing of the guerrilla command, led by Commanders Kilik, Mauk Moruk and Olo Gari, opposed the terms of the political negotiations and stood firm, still believing they had some military leverage.\footnote{Ibid.}

Many in the Indonesian military and government also disapproved of the talks, worried that they would elevate the status of the Timorese and reignite debate over the political status of the territory. Less than a week later on 28 March, Jusuf was also replaced as Commander of the Army by Benny Murdani who did not support the talks.

A ceasefire agreement was signed and CRRN presented a peace plan, calling for direct talks between Portugal, Indonesia and Fretilin under the mediation of the UN Secretary General, to debate the formation of a UN peacekeeping force to make feasible the functioning of a transitional administration, the organization of a free and democratic consultation of the Maubere people\footnote{Magalhães, op. cit., p. 34.} and the setting of a date for a transfer of sovereignty.\footnote{Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 91.} The consultation or referendum was a new bid, one they felt could gain wide international support. It was a position all countries and institutions committed to democracy and self-determination would be obliged to support.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 91-94.}

Iswanto and Purwanto countered with an offer of ‘special autonomy’ within Indonesia for East Timor. It was agreed that further negotiations would be held after the Indonesians had notified the UN of the talks. The resistance ultimately hoped that the UN would assist in brokering a negotiated solution. They also doubted the sincerity of their Indonesian negotiators, who in fact attempted to keep the talks a secret.\footnote{Ibid.}

The cease-fire made it possible to implement in a deeper fashion the plans laid out during the March 1981 National Conference. CRRN were able to establish closer links between the different areas of Timor, as well as to build up a well-functioning system of communication between villages, towns and the resistance in the bush. People in the countryside could travel

\footnote{Maubere was the term preferred by Fretilin to denote the East Timorese people. Cf. ch. 9.}

Colonel Purwanto & Xanana Gusmão. Source: Falintil Photos.

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
freely, meet and talk openly for the first time since the invasion. Those permitted to leave the re-settlement camps, travelled up to the mountains to visit the guerrillas and friends and relatives they had not seen for years. Xanana became increasingly well-known as the leader and some pinned their hopes on him for a quick and peaceful solution.\(^{192}\)

Xanana Gusmão (standing centre) with members of the resistance command, at the time of the ceasefire. Some of those present will figure prominently in the pages to come. Left to right: Oligari Aswain, Mauk Moruk, Bere Lalai Laka, Mau Hudo, Kilik, Lere Anan Timur, Ma’Huno. In front, with tape recorder: Salvador Monteiro.\(^{193}\)

**A new apostolic administrator**

If people had pinned their hopes on the increasingly outspoken Dom Martinho, they were soon to be woefully disappointed. Gradually, the Apostolic Administrator’s letters had found their way to the international press. At a time when news reports from East Timor were rare, they merited enough attention to even lead to debates in the Australian Parliament and the US Congress.\(^{194}\) Ultimately, this led the Catholic pro-Nuncio in Jakarta, a close friend of Armed Forces Chief General Benny Murdani, to pressure on the Vatican to ask Dom Martinho for his resignation, which the Vatican obligingly did.\(^{195}\) Thus, when Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo was appointed new Apostolic Administrator of East Timor at the Motael church in Dili on 12 May 1983, most of his fellow clergy saw him as an ‘outsider installed at the behest of the occupying power’\(^{196}\), and they even refused to attend the appointment ceremony. The same

\(^{192}\) Ibid, p. 94.


\(^{194}\) The present author surmises that the letters were also part of the background to the setting up of Christians in Solidarity with East Timor (CISET) in Australia in 1982. CISET was established as “a practical response by Australian churches to help end the suffering endured by the people of East Timor and build relations and mutual support with them” (Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, *Just Reading No. 2. The Church and East Timor*. Melbourne, 1993).


\(^{196}\) Kohen, op. cit., p. 147.
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pro-Nuncio who had asked the Vatican to withdraw Dom Martinho from his position had also
handpicked the inexperienced Belo to be offered the slot instead. One of Belo’s advantages,
from the Indonesian point of view, was that he had been away from Timor between 1968 to
1974 and 1975-1981, meaning that he was not ‘tainted’ by the political developments pre-
invasion, and had been spared the worst post-invasion atrocities.197 When Martino da Costa
Lopes was appointed Apostolic Administrator in 1977, the priests of East Timor had been
encouraged by the Vatican to vote who among them would be the most suitable for the
position. This time, the Vatican instead stated that it was ‘the Holy Spirit’ who had ordained
Belo – a proposition which became rather the object of ridicule.198

After the installation of the new head of the Church, Dom Martinho left Timor, against his
own wish, but advised to do so by his superiors. Dili crowds lined the road to the airport in
silent protest. He arrived in Lisbon not only with the resistance documents Xanana had given
him the previous year and damning information on the Indonesian military, but also photos
and documents about the ceasefire.199 En route to Portugal, he was received at the Vatican. He
spoke afterwards of the Pope’s attitude, and also met with Cardinal Casaroli and told him that
“you are wrong about Timor-Leste.”200 Dom Martinho was never to see Timor again, and died
in Portugal in 1991. Most people in Timor assumed that the new church leader would not
engage himself in such matters, but rather follow the wishes of the Vatican and keep quiet.201
The exiled Dom Martinho himself did not keep quiet. After his departure from Timor, he
travelled extensively, supported by civil society groups, to North America, Oceania, Japan
and Europe. Years later, this work would show results, when Catholic church-based support
groups popped up in places as geographically diverse as Canada and Japan.

Lost opportunities

Parallell to the above, the Australian Labour Party (ALP) was back in government after
elections on March 5, 1983. Despite an adopted policy from the 1982 party conference that all
defence aid to Indonesia would stop until Indonesian troops had left East Timor, new Prime
Minister Bob Hawke announced in Jakarta in June 1983 that Australian military aid to
Indonesia would continue202 – much like the Swedish labour party had done one year before
upon returning to government.

Also, Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, in an Indonesia-appealing move, appointed Bill
Morrison, who had been Defence Minister under Whitlam, as Australia’s Ambassador to
Jakarta. In July, Morrison led a parliamentary group to visit Indonesia, and an early August
(guided) tour of East Timor was included in the itinerary. The parliamentary group’s visit to
East Timor was not, however, a result of the new government’s eager wish to seek truth, but
came about only after a public inquiry at the Australian parliament in 1982-83, and was in all
likelihood intended to counter information put forth during this process. The inquiry had been
initiated by Labor Senator Gordon McIntosh, and carried out by civil society groups from the
East Timorese community in Australia, aid agencies, solidarity groups and churches. Carmel
Budiardjo of TAPOL, London, and Roger Clark of Rutgers University in the US, were among
those who testified during the inquiry. José Ramos Horta, eager to participate in the

197 Even so, he learned upon returning that his mother’s home town was now an Indonesian military base, and
that Quelica, where his father came from, now was known as one of the worst killing-grounds in the territory
(Kohen, op. cit., p. 138).
198 Kohen, op. cit., p. 146.
199 Niner, 2009, op. cit., p. 98.
201 Kohen, op. cit., p. 148.
202 Gunn, op. cit., 146.
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proceedings, was denied an entry visa to Australia (as were all Fretilin representatives between 1977 and 1982.) The inquiry concluded that the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor had had catastrophic consequences for human life and property, a conclusion that the Australian Foreign Affairs described as “unfounded allegations.”

Bill Morrison in his report concluded that the Indonesians had brought development and progress to Timor, and saw no evidence of human rights abuses. The delegation asserted that they saw no military activity, and that Indonesia was now concentrating its efforts on a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Mr. Morrison was quoted in the New Strait Times on August 3, 1983 as saying: “There has been an obvious, deliberate change in methods of operation, certainly this year. It’s now concentrating very much on psychological operations. It’s a hearts and minds programme.”

When the Australian delegation was in East Timor, it was offered the chance to meet a support network operating inside the Saelari resettlement camp. The invitation was conveyed to Bill Morrison, by a group of armed Fretilin fighters who managed to wave down the last two vehicles of the mission’s convoy on its way back to Baucau from Los Palos. The spokesman for the group, Cancio de Sousa Gama, told Morrison that forty men and women from the bush had been living in Saelari for two months, preparing for this opportunity to meet the parliamentarians. In Gama’s words ‘even in this camp controlled by the Indonesians, everyone has made up his/her mind that they have their goal which is total independence.’

The request was almost certainly deliberately mistranslated and, instead of going with the guerrillas, Morrison handed them his visiting card!

Delegation member Gordon McIntosh’s decision to dissent from the delegation report earned him the respect of the Timorese resistance, plus the nickname, Ulon Toos – literally hard-headed’ or ‘stubborn’, the Tetun word ‘Toos’ rhyming with ‘Tosh’.

Even Timorese working for the Indonesian provisional government of East Timor were not allowed to speak with the few foreign journalists who were allowed. Even on the rare occasion when they were the event was stage managed (see example below). All employees of the government were instructed by Indonesian intelligence that if approached by foreigners they must not answer questions or must give answers previously provided on paper by the secret police. People did not want to risk either their lives or the lives of their families so they complied. A typical example of the way events were stage managed occurred during a visit to Ataúro by a Portuguese film crew in 1983. I was abroad by then and watched Eugenio Scares being interviewed by the Portuguese journalists. Eugenio was then the sub-district administrator of Atauro, a qualified primary school teacher, holding a Portuguese Diploma and a fluent Portuguese speaker. He answered questions from the Portuguese journalist in Tetun, through an interpreter who ‘just’ happened to be Mariano Lopes da Cruz the brother of Francisco Lopes da Cruz the Indonesian appointed Vice-Governor at that time Obviously the Indonesian authorities were taking no chances and making sure that Eugenio was not tempted to denounce them publicly to the T.V. media (Refugee Politics. Timorese in Exile. Justino Maria Aparicio Guterres, 1992).

Xanana attempted to extend the period of the ceasefire in the hope the international community would intervene and he fired off a letter to solidarity groups, in which he

204 East Timor report. ACFOA, September 5, 1983.
205 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 82.
206 Aarons & Domm, op. cit., p. 38)
207 It also made him the chosen recipient of a 1988 letter from Xanana Gusmão in which the resistance leader formulated his views on the internal and international aspects of the Indonesian occupation at that time. Somehow the letter got lost somewhere along the way, but a photocopy of it was discovered in August 2015, and a copy was then forwarded to McIntosh, whose belated reply was handed personally to Gusmão in Melbourne in December 2015 (!)
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requested all ‘peace-loving countries and peoples’ to pressure Indonesia into wider negotiations for a ‘just and peaceful solution’.\(^{208}\) Xanana also contacted Mário Carrascalão through Father Locatelli, and a meeting between the two East Timorese leaders at the end of May was the beginning of a more collaborative relationship.\(^{209}\) So, while Xanana delayed to ensure the effective re-organisation of the resistance, the Indonesians were angling for greater international acceptance of the annexation that the visit from the Australian parliamentary group could bring.\(^{210}\)

![Mario Carrascalão & Xanana Gusmão 1983. Source: Falintil Photos.](image)

This was a great chance for the Indonesian side to put an end to the politically embarrassing and humanely tragic ‘East Timor question.’ Many lives would have been saved, and much trauma would have been avoided, had Suharto and his generals decided to do so. Tragically, Purwanto was instead side-stepped by General Benny Murdani, who now took the initiative.\(^{211}\) An ominous sign was seen when permission given to the International Red Cross to undertake relief activities at Ataúro was withdrawn in July 1983.\(^{212}\) Amnesty was offered to Fretilin, if they gave up the struggle, and Murdani, in an interview in the Indonesian newspaper *Sinar Harapan*, threatened to wipe out Fretilin if they ignored his call to surrender. ‘This time, no more fooling around. We are going to hit them without mercy’, the General said.\(^{213}\) Another sign was that Captain Prabowo Subianto – the person behind the killing of Fretilin’s president Nicolau Lobato - returned to East Timor (newly-wed with Siti Hediati Haryadi, one of Suharto’s daughters) and was now operating out of a base in Ossű, near Viqueque.

\(^{208}\) Niner, 2009, op. cit., p. 98.
\(^{209}\) Ibid, p. 99.
\(^{210}\) Ibid, p. 100.
\(^{211}\) He had by then also taken over the position as the most important figure in Indonesian Intelligence from the ailing and politically declining Ali Murtopo. Murdani established the organisation BAI\(\text{S} (\text{Badian Intelen Strategis} – \text{the Strategic Intelligence Agency}), which replaced an earlier and smaller body, Pusintelstrat (Pusat Intelen Strategis – the Strategic Intelligence centre). Headed by Murdani. Pusintelstrat in its turn had been a part of the Opus ‘empire’ (cf. chapters 8 & 9), run as ‘essentially a private organisation’ by Murtopo – as we have seen above in the case of Operasi Komodo (Vatikiotis, op. cit., p. 229). BAIS, on the contrary, was a hierarchical and formal structure, and after Opus was dissolved in 1984 it became undoubtedly the most important intelligence agency in Indonesia (Vatikiotis, op. cit., p. 221).
\(^{212}\) Torben Retbøll, 1987, op. cit., p. 25.
\(^{213}\) IWGIA 1984:159
A return to massive and large-scale violence

With Purwanto out, and the hardliners in the Indonesian military gaining an upper hand, the resistance realised that it was only a matter of time before they would be attacked ‘without mercy.’ Meanwhile, the resistance had also planned to break the cease-fire, through an uprising in Viqueque on 17 August. This was in its turn supposed to lead to a massive defection of thousands of Timorese soldiers and paramilitary from the Indonesian military. However, a premature attack by one of the resistance forces on an Indonesian camp at Bibileu resulted in six Indonesian deaths. This alerted the Indonesian army, and the massive attack on Viqueque never went underway. Even though the attack on Viqueque was now spoilt, some of the East Timorese paramilitary defected anyway. This group then attacked an Indonesian post outside Viqueque at Caraubalo, killing five Indonesians and seizing guns. In Xanana’s words,”this action meant that we broke the ceasefire, but strategically the Indonesians had already broken it by threatening us”.

And then there was Kraras. Kraras was a ‘resettlement area,’ in the Viqueque area, a strategic village set up by the Indonesians to accommodate a few thousand Timorese who had been driven down from the mountainous interior during the military campaigns of 1977-79. Among the inhabitants of Kraras were a number of former guerrillas, kept under special guard. Early in August 1983 an uprising took place in Kraras. The revolt was led by the guerrillas, who turned on their guards, killed a number of them and fled to rejoin Falintil.

The hard line warned of by Murdani was clearly revealed at Kraras and the surrounding area, where in the months of September-October 1983 more than 200 civilians were massacred in a series of executions. First the village of Be-lui was looted, ransacked and burnt on 7 September, and on the 17th, 181 people from Bibileu and Uma Ki’ik villages were massacred on the Be Tuku River, by a mixed force of Indonesians and Ratih.

Celestino dos Anjos, the only Timorese awarded a loyalty medal by Australia after WWII, was one of those killed near Bibileo. His son told the story in a letter smuggled out to his former military comrade Steve Stevenson. The letter was dated 2 March 1984 but was not received outside until 1986:

On 27/9/83 they called my father and my wife and not far from the camp, they told my father to dig his own grave and when they saw it was deep enough to receive him, they machine-gunned him into the grave. They next told my pregnant wife to dig her own grave but she insisted that she preferred to share my father’s grave. They then pushed her into the grave and killed her in the same manner as my father.

In the eastern district of Lautém, a number of defections from ABRI to the guerrillas occurred in August 1983. More than 30 armed members of Hansip, with their families and members of a clandestine youth group, defected in Mehara on 9 August, followed by smaller-scale defections in Lore and Serelau, while a similar action was discovered and thwarted in Lliomar. In an attempt to put an end to this, Indonesian military forces detained hundreds of men and women in this eastern part of the territory. Between August 1983 and March 1984 around 100 civilians, mostly men, were also executed in various locations throughout the district.

On one such occasion, the local Indonesian commander of Los Palos, known as the Dandim, ordered the imprisonment and torture of 30 locals in order to uncover their leaders.

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214 Niner, 2009, op. cit., p. 100, quoting from interview with Xanana Gusmão.
216 CAVR 2005:66
217 Turner, op. cit., p. 175
218 CAVR 2005:66
Following this, the Dandim then ordered the population of five villages in the area to assemble for a party to be held to welcome some foreign visitors (the above-mentioned Australian delegation had recently visited the area). The population was speechless when they saw that they, instead of the foreign guests, were presented with the five people responsible for their clandestine organisation. The Dandim then gave the order to a nanggala (knife killer) to cut off their heads. The Indonesian officer, after forbidding the population to cry, threatened them, saying if he learned of anyone else continuing to support the resistance he would get the same fate.\(^{219}\)

During this extremely brutal period in East Timor, two examples from the outside world serve well to illustrate the response to the ‘East Timor question’ in (parts of) civil society and on state level, respectively. Amnesty International, in a statement to the United Nations Decolonisation Committee on September 2, 1983, made public the guidelines to military personnel that were captured by Falintil at the end of December 1982. In so doing, Amnesty also gave accounts of the widespread torture, extrajudicial executions and ‘disappearances’ in the territory.\(^{220}\) Amnesty even went as far as pinpointing houses in Dili where interrogation (i.e. torture) took place, such as ‘the house formerly owned by Fracisco Babo in the Rua Abilio Monteira in the Colmera district, now believed to be occupied by a unit of Kopassandha. This house had a reputation, according to one of Amnesty’s sources, saying that:

> If you go there, things are 99.9% hopeless. Those sent there had been caught in the mountains fighting against Indonesian troops, especially the bush commanders. They are tortured for information with cigarettes to the cheeks, breasts, ears, genitals and with electric shocks. Then they are killed.\(^{221}\)

On the other hand, Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, questioned on a visit to Portugal about reports in Australian press of the worsening situation in East Timor in September 1983, stated that some of the reports were “erroneously based”, coming from “people who have rather emotional concern about the issue.”\(^{222}\)

The new Apostolic Administrator, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, now showed that he was both “emotionally concerned” and the wrong man for the job (from an Indonesian military point of view). In October 1983 he delivered a sermon at Dili Cathedral in which he protested against the brutalities of Kraras and other places and condemned the many arrests being made by the Indonesian army.\(^{223}\) Needless to say, the Indonesian authorities were deeply disappointed and displeased. Had the Indonesian authorities accepted the peace-plan laid out by Falintil in 1983, the appointment of Belo as replacement for da Costa Lopes would not have had such catastrophic consequences (for the same Indonesian authorities). Bishop Belo (as he was always called) soon became the missing piece of the puzzle needed to create an East Timorese nationalism and, in its extension, also of a civil society of some magnitude. He would also take upon himself the role of representing the East Timorese Catholic Church in the outside world. In this role, he was initially an exceedingly lonely piece of the puzzle. Shortly after his appointment, the Indonesian Catholic bishops sent him a letter of solidarity.

This was not repeated; under pressure from the powers that be, they chose thereafter to remain close to the government line, re events in Timor Timur.\(^{224}\)

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\(^{219}\) Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 102.

\(^{220}\) IWGIA, 1984, pp. 82-96

\(^{221}\) IWGIA, 1984, pp. 86-87.

\(^{222}\) Ibid, p. 120

\(^{223}\) Ibid, p. 36

\(^{224}\) Kohen, op. cit., p. 162.
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The refusal of Fretilin to surrender led to a massive Indonesian military operation. Refugees who managed to escape to Portugal said that parachute regiments and thousands of other troops were massed in East Timor after mid-August 1983. Following the brutal attacks on mostly civilians in September and October 1983, twelve thousand Indonesian troops set up a north-south cordon across Timor in November and swept eastwards against Fretilin guerrillas, backed by air and naval bombardments, according to an eight-page coded document from Xanana Gusmão which reached Lisbon on 27 January 1984.

Again Bishop Belo reacted. He wrote a letter abroad, signed 18 February 1984, to his predecessor Dom Martinho. The letter, which was hand carried from Timor, said (abridged):

As you know, the situation has deteriorated. In every district they have arrested people (600 in Dili alone), who are being judged in military trials. Others are made to disappear ... In the kabupaten of Lospalos, Viqueque, Baucau and Ainaro there is war, and the people are being corralled. They are suffering from illness, hunger, the deprivation of liberty and persecution ...

There are 10 battalions in Lospalos alone, and even with these they are not winning the war. They thought to finish things off by the end of December 1983, but we are already in February 1984 and there is no end in sight. As a result, the Indonesian military are once again conscripting the civilian population ... there go our men, armed with swords and knives, leaving their gardens unworked. It is a misery, Monsignor. In Muapitini and Iliomar there have been popular judgements, that is those implicated in contacts with those in the bush were murdered in front of the assembled people – with knives, swords and sticks, and by their own families – we are living in a macabre situation.

Bishop Belo appealed for those abroad ‘to pray for us, and appeal to the free world to open its eyes to the barbarities of which the Indonesians are capable’.

A letter, written at the end of February 1984 and smuggled out of East Timor to Portugal, describes a military sweep in the Bobonaro area during that month: From the 1st to the 13th they began rounding up individuals. On the 14th they began massacring prisoners, initially capturing two hansips and one civilian. The red berets tortured the two hansips with nails, needles, cigarette butts and razor blades until they died. The civilian did not die, but they broke his leg with a gunshot. The worsening situation, and the lack of reaction to it from the outside world, especially so from Portugal, led José Ramos Horta to make a bitter “Statement on the current Portuguese attitude on the question of East Timor”, published in the Swedish bulletin Öst-Timor Information, in October 1983.

I am issuing this statement in my individual capacity as an East Timorese patriot who is shocked by the indifference on the part of the current Portuguese Government on the question of East Timor. I witnessed with dismay the apathy of the Portuguese during the discussion of the item entitled “Question of East Timor” in the Special Committee of Decolonization” (in September 1983, G.J.) the UN)…After a brief period of one year, under the Government of Prime Minister Belsamo, during which the Portuguese Government did make some serious effort to alert the international community to the tragedy of the people of East Timor, we are now returning to the silence and desertion that has been the attitude of the Portuguese authorities from 1974 till 1981.

225 IWGIA 1984:159
226 IWGIA 1984:164
227 The letter was published in the Canberra Times, 3 May 1984, and is quoted in IWGIA 1984:191-192)
229 IWGIA, op. cit., pp. 196-197
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The church becomes a unifying force

From this period Bishop Belo became a symbol of resistance and unity among the East Timorese people, and membership in the Catholic Church increased dramatically and fast - from a mere 27.8 per cent of the population in 1973 to 81.4 per cent in 1989.230

The striking massive conversion to Catholicism, beginning after the invasion in 1975, needs some explanation, since the dominant religion of the invading forces is Islam. In the climate of oppression, the Church, according to João Boavida came to function as “the last repository of Timorese identity.”231 According to Indonesian law, every citizen has to adhere to one of the book-religions – Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Protestant and Catholic churches - and in 1975 a majority of East Timorese were still animists. Moreover, failure to choose could be interpreted as support for atheism, which to the military authorities meant Communism. Converting to the only familiar book-religion, Catholicism, rather than to Islam, functioned as “a reinforcement of the social and cultural difference between the occupier and the occupied”.232 As Patsy Thatcher has pointed out, going to church also allowed Timorese to come together in large groups, which was not allowed elsewhere.233 In East Timor the church has been the one place where the population could gather together and escape the pressures of living under occupation.

Thus, the conversion of almost the entire indigenous population to the Catholic faith that has occurred during the period of occupation must be seen as a mode of resistance on the part of the East Timorese people. The church, in the words of Benedict Anderson, “emerged as an expression of a common suffering, just as it did in nineteenth-century Ireland.”234 Anthony Smith has pointed out the central role of priests in transmitting a sense of common identity in societies where formal systems of education are lacking or deficient.235 As mentioned earlier in this book, the Timorese traditionally distinguish between spiritual authority and political power. Political power was clearly in the hands of the Indonesians, but spiritual authority was now clearly vested in the Catholic Church.236

Women were often, as has been described earlier in gruesome detail, suffering severe brutalities from the Indonesian military. In the East Timorese context, the Catholic Church provided one of the only ‘spaces’ unoccupied by Indonesia, and there were times when the Church quite literally provided protection for young women and girls, who took refuge in the local presbytery or convent to avoid being raped. Milena Pires and Catherine Scott point out that the sense of empowerment of women produced by the strong allegiance to the Catholic Church is at the psychological level – religious faith helps the women go on resisting in face of unbearable conditions in daily life. As one Timorese woman said, ‘they take our bodies but not our souls, our identity, our integrity.’237 Yet, as Pires and Scott also emphasize, “East Timorese Catholicism is extremely traditional, and women in the church, as women in Timorese culture at large, are at the bottom of the pile.”238 Torben Retbøll, with a wry

231 Boavida, op. cit., p. 2.
232 Ibid.
238 Ibid, p.146.
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understatement, writes that, “the (East Timorese) Church … is not known for its enthusiastic support for women’s liberation … the Church does not tolerate divorce, the use of contraception and absolutely no access to abortion.” Cristalis and Scott, however, distinguish between faith as a lived experience and the church as hierarchy and structure. Within the Catholic Church men hold the power, but to a considerable degree women mould and shape the structures with which they are connected to suit both their practical and their spiritual needs. In East Timor both the church as structure (quite literally) and faith as resource appear to have helped empower women in the face of adversity.

The diplomatic game – sell-out and solidarity

In mid-1984, Xanana Gusmão sent a lengthy message, titled “What is National Unity?” to the resistance, in which he discussed the lack of political unity among the East Timorese since 1974, and called for more co-operation. He also openly discussed the purges carried out by Fretilin between 1975 and 1978, and insisted that negotiations and diplomatic representation be seen as equally important as the armed struggle.

Coinciding with this message – and echoing its emphasis on political and diplomatic action – José Ramos Horta visited Australia for six weeks, in a campaign to win delegates to his side at the ALP (Australian Labor Party) national conference. He was not entirely successful, as a resolution made at the conference rather vaguely called for support to international initiatives on the issue. He also met ALP Foreign Minister Bill Hayden in June 1984. Hayden reluctantly accepted the meeting, and, according to Horta, only did so to avoid criticism from the ALP left. Horta presented the Fretilin peace plan that Xanana had put forward to the Indonesian side during the talks with Purwanto the previous year, asking Hayden for Australia’s support in implementing it. The idea was for Australia to help arrange a meeting without preconditions, between representatives for the United Nations, Portugal, Indonesia and Fretilin. The proposal was rejected by Hayden, on the grounds that Indonesia would not accept the terms anyway, saying also that “Fretilin is reduced to a small band of terrorists who are desperate, pillaging villages, murdering people,” and therefore it would be inappropriate for Australia to propose or host such an event.

It may be argued that Horta’s meeting with Hayden suffered from bad timing. The Australian and Indonesian governments had back in 1971-71 signed agreements delimiting the maritime boundary on most parts of both sides of the so called Timor Gap, with the line drawn closer to the Indonesian side, halfway between the continental shelves. However, a 250 km. gap was not covered because East Timor was then under Portuguese control (cf. ch. 7). Following its de facto and then de jure acceptance of the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor as its 27th province, the Liberal government of former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had held four rounds of discussions with Jakarta to try to close the gap. The talks ended in October 1981 without success. Then, in late 1983, an oil find in the Jabiru field, discovered by a consortium headed by the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. (BHP)—the country’s biggest firm — indicated that this might be part of a major new oilfield extending to other

parts of the Timor Sea, including the zone disputed with Indonesia. This meant that Australia’s wish for a solution became more acute, since Indonesia now argued that the line between the two countries be drawn halfway between the shorelines, thereby extending the Indonesian zone substantially. Indonesia based this claim on the Law of the Sea Convention, which both Australia and Indonesia had signed. This replaced the earlier 1958 (Geneva) Convention, which laid out the equidistance between the continental shelves as the border between independent states. Australia, wishing to close the Timor Gap with a straight line between the borders outside the gap, clearly saw this development as worrisome. Clearly, any meddling in the ‘East Timor question,’ especially if this meant giving Fretilin a voice in the proceedings, would not be helpful in this precarious situation.

Clearly, East Timor was now a non-issue, a case of *fait accompli*, at least on state-level globally. With both Portugal and Australia lacking interest to oppose Indonesia on this subject and the case laying dormant at the UN, there is no wonder that other states turned a blind eye to the situation and chose to promote their relations with Indonesia. It was also clear that it had become important to the resistance to make strong efforts in trying to make those blind eyes see. José Ramos Horta was the person chosen to accomplish this on a diplomatic level, especially in regards to the Western world.

He did so with a seemingly boundless energy, and an obvious flair for this line of work. Co-operating with an increasing number of solidarity groups and individuals, the visual support for East Timor’s right to self-determination grew incessantly. From 1983 onwards, the shift of focus, away from a support only of Fretilin and independence, and towards humanitarian issues and self-determination proved to be a successful policy. An increasing awareness in Catholic circles about the massive conversions to their faith in East Timor also resulted in an increasing involvement among Catholics globally, adding yet another dimension to the solidarity movement. The religious groups of solidarity with East Timor varied from small local groups like the Lisbon based ‘A Paz e Possivel em Timor Leste’ (Peace is possible in East Timor), to nationally based institutions (such as the Catholic Institute of International Relations, from the United Kingdom) and international Catholic movements; Pax Christi, Catholic Relief Service or Justice and Peace Commissions. In Arnold Kohen’s words, "the contribution of the Catholic Church could hardly be judged on the basis of politics in the Vatican bureaucracy alone." Solidarity and human rights groups from England, Holland, Sweden, West Germany, and Portugal issued a statement in September 1983 where they called on their governments to stop the arms export to Indonesia and to support the East Timorese people. In November, the Conference of Indonesian Bishops sent a letter to Timorese clergy assuring them of their support and calling for the respect for human rights in East Timor. They also cautiously urged Indonesian officials to deal with East Timor in a “spirit of honesty.” One month later, over 100 members of the US Congress urged President Reagan in a letter to “add the suffering of the people of East Timor to America’s foreign policy agenda.” The letter also asked the president to pressure Indonesia to allow the ICRC into the territory and to work with Australia and Portugal ‘to develop creative policies to address the underlying causes of the going human suffering in East Timor.’ At the same time, 128 members of the British parliament supported a resolution that called on the government “to halt the sale of arms and military equipment to Indonesia and to take other urgent steps to press Indonesia to halt military operations.” Soon after, in January 1984, a deputation of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, led by Lord Avebury, made the same demands, and also urged the Foreign

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245 de Sousa Santos & Arriscado Nunes, op. cit., p. 205.
246 Kohen 1999, 142.
Office to work towards UN consultations that include Fretilin. In February 1984, the Major Superiors of the Religious Orders in Australia wrote to Monsignor Belo that: “We the Major Superiors of Religious in Australia write to express our heartfelt support for all your efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace in East Timor. We know that this is the deepest aspiration of your people.”

In March 1984 the Portuguese bishops followed suit, with a statement that expressed solidarity with the people of East Timor and called upon the Portuguese and Indonesian governments to do everything in their power to bring an end to the tragic situation in East Timor. In May 1984 the British Parliamentary Human Rights group again showed their concern, by sending a dossier to all members of the IGGI, asking them to end economic assistance to Indonesia. In June, the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, presented Portuguese Prime Minister Mario Soares with a letter when he visited Tokyo: “We wish to plead with Your Excellency to do all in your power to carry out the mandate in your new constitution to make every effort to work for the realization of self-determination for the East Timorese who, despite annexation and invasion by Indonesia, continue to struggle for their independence and for the survival of their culture.” This was a direct result of the travels of the unwillingly exiled Dom Martinho, who had met and influenced the Bishop of Nagoya, Aloisius Soma to became an outspoken advocate for East Timor’s right to self-determination. Soma’s openness led to a reprimand from the Vatican. This he ignored, on the grounds that “there is absolutely no need to ask permission to do the right thing.”

Also in June 1984, a bipartisan group of 123 representatives and twenty-two senators of the US Congress appealed to Secretary of State, George Shultz, urging him to raise the issue during his visit to Jakarta the following month, which Shultz also did, leading to an unusual comment about East Timor in the American press. The end-result of all this, was that East Timor, still far from being a house-hold name, was not an unknown entity anymore. As Torben Retbøll noted, even if much that is written about East Timor still ignores the facts about Western arms sales and responsibility for Indonesia’s actions, “the cover-up that existed during the first four years of the conflict is over.”

Fretilin – again an internal purge

Xanana Gusmão’s new two-pronged line, where diplomatic action and even talks with the enemy were seen as complementary and equal to the armed resistance, was vehemently opposed by Fretilin hardliners. We have already seen that the radicals on the outside had to give up on some of their demands in dealing with support groups in Portugal in 1981, and now it was time to test the relative powers among the armed resistance in East Timor. A confrontation was unavoidable. It is still, in the words of Edward Rees, “arguably the greatest controversy that exists in Falintil’s history.”

As mentioned above, some within Fretilin/Falintil opposed both the 1983 ceasefire and Xanana Gusmão’s reconciliatory tone taken towards UDT and others in his ‘National Unity’ message. Leading among those were three Falintil commanders Mauk Moruk, Ologari Aswain and Kilik Wai Gai. According to Gusmão, there had been a meeting at Hudi Laran, in which he (Gusmão) had been accused of being a revolutionary traitor for changing the

248 Ibid.
251 CAVR, 2006, Chapter 7, Self Determination, p. 73.
252 Ibid.
253 Rees, op. cit., p. 32.
254 Ibid.
fundamental ideology of the resistance struggle, and suggesting that he had been corrupted during the ceasefire conversations, while his accusers saw themselves as the true inheritors of their predecessors. When Xanana held a “Reorganisation meeting” in September 1984, they chose not to attend. A resolution was passed on 4 September in which the military structure was revised. Also, Ologari Aswain, Kilik Wai Gai and Mauk Moruk were expelled from the Central Committee. Ologari Aswain then retired from active resistance, but the others did not accept their dismissal. Xanana subsequently sent a platoon to disarm the rebels, and here is where the big controversy begins. The leader of the platoon has afterwards stated that Kilik disappeared and that Moruk gave himself up to ABRI forces, rather than to face the disgrace of being disarmed by his own. Other Falintil commanders have claimed that Kilik was killed by Indonesians. That Moruk ended up as pro-Indonesian is in no doubt, as he made a pro-integration appearance at the UN in 1994. In his statement he accused Xanana Gusmão of partaking in executions and massacres, and also that he gave the order to kill Kilik Wai Gai.\footnote{Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 106.}

This violent split within Fretilin/Falintil, while marking the beginning of Xanana Gusmão’s largely unopposed leadership within East Timor during the struggle for self-determination, also left a legacy of unhealed wounds, and a lasting rift between the Gusmão side and Fretilin hard-liners.\footnote{Ibid, p. 107.} However, on the ground in East Timor, and for those abroad, it meant that Gusmão now had a firmer grip on the military leadership, together with a number of trusted commanders, among them Mau Hudo (José da Costa), Ma’Huno (Antonio Gomes da Costa), Holy Natxa and Konis Santana. His vision of a truly nationalistic resistance movement, as opposed to a resistance represented only by Fretilin, had now gained the upper hand.\footnote{Ibid.}

Kilik Wai Gai, Mauk Moruk and Ologari Aswain were dead or ousted, but their followers and, in some cases, relatives – and indeed Aswain himself – were to show up years later as powerful forces in the politics of East Timor.

In November 1984, the southern coast of Timor island was exposed to naval bombardment, due to Falintil troops moving to this area to escape the ‘fence of legs’ operations in July and August.\footnote{Taylor, op. cit., p. 49.} Still, in December 1984 General Benny Murdani had to admit in an interview in December that the resistance probably totalled a number of about 10,000 people, and that the war against it would not be over within the next two years.\footnote{Reuters Jakarta, 17 December 1984, partly printed in Jakarta Post, 18 December 1984 and cited in Retbøll 1987, p. 27. In June 1983, Bishop Belo had in a conversation with a Catholic priest in Jakarta estimated that Fretilin had 1700 armed soldiers, organised in ten units (Taylor, op. cit, p. 40.) It may be that Murdani exaggerated the number of the opposing force to account for ABRI’s failure in defeating it, or that he among the 10,000 included his estimate of Falintil plus active supporters.} At about this time, a radio transmitter, set up by Denis Freney and smuggled into Timor by Juan Federer, meant that radio contact with the outside was recommenced in 1985.\footnote{Jude Conway (ed.) Step by Step: Women of East Timor. Stories of Resistance and Survival. Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010, p. 6.} While this gave the resistance a link to the outside world, it also gave Xanana the possibility to bypass the ‘radicals’ in the Fretilin leadership abroad and communicate directly with other support groups, Timorese or foreign.\footnote{Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 107.} On 20 May, Xanana also in a message to those on the outside called for a ‘convergence’ between UDT and Fretilin, an unthinkable wish had it not been for the internal ‘softening’ of the policies of the resistance.\footnote{Ibid, p. 108.}

In an exchange of messages between Lord Avebury (chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group), Carmel Budiardjo (TAPOL) and Xanana Gusmão, the latter put forward the proposal that the UN Secretary General would be welcome to talk directly with Fretilin,

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  \item 255 Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 106.
  \item 256 Ibid, p. 107.
  \item 257 Ibid.
  \item 258 Taylor, op. cit., p. 49.
  \item 259 Reuters Jakarta, 17 December 1984, partly printed in Jakarta Post, 18 December 1984 and cited in Retbøll 1987, p. 27. In June 1983, Bishop Belo had in a conversation with a Catholic priest in Jakarta estimated that Fretilin had 1700 armed soldiers, organised in ten units (Taylor, op. cit, p. 40.) It may be that Murdani exaggerated the number of the opposing force to account for ABRI’s failure in defeating it, or that he among the 10,000 included his estimate of Falintil plus active supporters.
  \item 261 Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 107.
  \item 262 Ibid, p. 108.
\end{itemize}
PART 3. OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

either in Dili or in Darwin, “if the Secretary General were unable to come to East Timor”, thus echoing the failed attempts by UN special representative Vittorio Winspeare Gucciardi to establish direct contact with Fretilin in February 1976. Gusmão also confirmed that since then, no further attempts at contact had been made from the UN. In his message, Xanana asked for outside supporters to defend our rights, to publicise our struggle, to denounce the crimes committed by the forces of occupation, and to encourage international public opinion to wage a campaign of pressure on their respective governments to ensure that the people of East Timor are not denied their inalienable rights. This work also supports the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to work for a just solution of the conflict in the light of the principles laid down in the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.263

_Pempanggunan (development)_

Indonesian rule in East Timor meant – so far - a state of full-scale war and massive terror against the population slowly giving way to a daily life filled with intimidations and restrictions, with always a threat of violence in the background. From ca 1985, the number of killings and disappearances carried out by ABRI and its auxiliaries declined relative to the earlier years of the occupation. However, the Indonesian security forces continued to kill and cause the disappearance of civilians who had real or suspected association to groups resisting the occupation.264

It is also true that Indonesian rule meant substantial improvements to East Timor’s infrastructure and education system, with numerous new schools, health centres265 and development projects.266 According to Indonesian statistics, Jakarta subsidised East Timor to a greater extent than any other province.267 However, a high percentage of the expenditure was allocated to building the roads and bridges which provided the infrastructure for the military activities of the occupation forces, and for strictly commercial purposes, controlled by the same military. The roads under construction in 1984 ran from Dili through Aileu to Same in the south-west, from Ermera to Maliana and from Dili to Baucau, the chief military-and air-base. One of the earliest roads to be asphalted was from Dili to Ermera in the heart-land of coffee-growing country.

While oppression and violence during the Indonesian occupation far exceeded those of Portugal’s, economic exploitation was also more efficient and large-scale than during the Portuguese times. The main commercial company in East Timor was PT Denok Hernandes,

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265 One aspect of the activities at the health centres that caused strong suspicion among the East Timorese, was the KB family planning program (Program Keluarga Berencana), There was a strong belief that this program was used by the Indonesian government to undermine the survival of the East Timorese as a national group. Even if there is insufficient evidence that such was the case, women were unwilling to turn to the government health system for fear of sterilisation. They chose instead to rely on church clinics. One unintended consequence of the KB program was thus the strengthening of church authority (Miranda, E. Sissons, _From One Day to Another: Violations of Women’s Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor_. Fitzroy, Victoria: The East Timor Human Rights Centre Incorporated, 1997, p. 8. See also Clinton Fernandes, _The Independence of East Timor_. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011, p. 76.)
267 See for instance _Economic and Social Development in East Timor Province_. Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, 1986.
which was owned by the group of senior military officers who were instrumental behind and commanding Operasi Komodo and Operasi Seroja – Benny Murdani, Dading Kalbuadi and Sahala Rajagugikug, the latter, as discussed previously, being one of the persons who authorised the instructions re surveillance of the population and the use of torture during interrogations. With the aid of a small clique of businessmen, PT Denok then grew into a holding company, PT Batara Indra Group, which monopolised almost the entire economy of East Timor. One of the companies controlled by this group was PT Salazar Coffee Plantations, others were the sandalwood oil-refining company PT Scent Indonesia, which was granted concessions in all the sandalwood forests throughout East Timor, and PT Marmer Timor (East Timor Marble Company), which was granted a monopoly over all marble quarrying in East Timor. Another subsidiary of PT Batara Indra group, PT Watu Besi Raya, grabbed hold of most of the civil engineering projects in East Timor.268

From ca 1981 – after the end of open, incessant warfare - large-scale farming, cash-crop cultivation and absentee landownership increased rapidly in East Timor. At the same time, small landholdings in certain areas, such as Maliana and Covalima, were taken out of the hands of native peasants, and distributed (“pulled out of a hat”, in the words of Carmel Budiardjo) to newcomers from Bali and/or other densely populated islands, in accordance with the so-called Transmigrasi (transmigration) programme.269

Administered by the Department of Transmigration, the transmigration programme was officially established with a double intent; to lessen the population density of islands such as Java, Bali and Madura, and stimulate development in relatively undeveloped regions.270 Its critics271, however, saw it as a costly and failed experiment, leading to ecological disaster, and the uprooting of tribal peoples, and that it also had an explicit strategic objective when transmigration sites were placed in ‘trouble spots’, such as Irian Jaya and East Timor. The last point was underscored by General Benny Murdani himself, who described the programme as “the only programme in the economic field that must quite categorically be tied in with defence and security considerations.”272

In 1984 East Timor was officially declared a settlement area within this controversial programme, and it was announced that four hundred desa binaan (guided villages) were to be set up in East Timor. The ‘guided villages’ scheme, co-ordinated by the Department of Home Affairs in Jakarta was intended to “encourage the people to change from their backward way of life”, by showing examples of more efficient agriculture.273 In May 1985 thirty-seven families were brought from Bali to Timor.274 As the transmigrasi programme expanded from this humble beginning, social as well as legal conflicts erupted. The transmigration sites were in many cases locations where the Timorese had lived before the 1977-79 offensives, and when in 1986, a large number of people from the strategic camps were allowed to return to their home villages, many found that their land was occupied.275

The transmigration programme, however, never led to the ‘Javanisation’ of East Timor that many initially feared. As Lansell Taudevin points out, the great majority of those who were

269 Aditjondro, op. cit., p. 135.
273 Economic and Social Development in East Timor Province. Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, 1986a, pp. 15-16.)
274 Lawson, op. cit., p. 95.
relocated to the transmigration sites were East Timorese who had been uprooted by the war. Only in the Beco area, close to the border with West Timor, did the number of Indonesian migrants reach anywhere near 50% of the total population. The ‘outsiders’ at Beco were Balinese farmers, who had been forcibly moved from their lands to give place for a luxury tourist resort.276

A large part of the Indonesian state’s expenditure allotted for Timor Timur, was ploughed into education, with the intent of indoctrinating the younger generation and thus, in the long run, creating good citizens out of the local population.277 The Indonesians set up more schools in five years than the Portuguese were able to do in the hundred years or so since the first mission schools were founded. This underscored the top priority given to the objective of making Indonesians out of the young East Timorese. To achieve this, the following pedagogical methods were used:

- Insistence upon Bahasa Indonesia as the sole language used in schools
- Relentless indoctrination of Pancasila, Indonesia’s state dogma
- A school curriculum which was thoroughly Indonesian – and devoid of information about East Timor
- A strong emphasis on physical education and on membership of pramuka, the state-controlled scout movement dedicated to training youngsters in parading, long marches, saluting the flag and singing nationalist Indonesian songs.278

The one exception to this was the earlier mentioned Colegio de Externato de Säo José secondary school, where Portuguese was allowed as a school language and where the teachers, save for those in History and Bahasa, were Portuguese or Timorese. The Externato, not supported by the government, but rather subsisting on contributions from the children’s families, had about 500 pupils of both sexes. This school gained importance as somewhat of a ‘breeding ground’ for some among the clandestine resistance in the early 1980’s. 279

Urbanisation was another unintended result of the Indonesian occupation. Dili’s population expanded dramatically, from an estimated 28,000 in 1975 to 67,039 in 1980 and 80,000 in 1985.280 The reasons for people to head for the capital were manifold. As noted earlier in this book, the majority of East Timor’s rural population lived in a dispersed settlement structure, a structure which was brutally destroyed during the military campaigns during the latter half of the 1970’s and the early years of the 1980’s. The main part of the rural population was then forced into the “resettlement centres.” When the population was allowed to leave these centres in the mid- 1980’s, many sought employment and safety in Dili rather than return to their home villages, where life was subject to the control of the authorities according to the system described earlier. Also, many of the smaller settlements had simply disappeared during the war, or had been merged into ‘nucleated villages’ by the Indonesian authorities.281

Because the military campaigns to quell resistance were centred on the rural areas where the guerrilla forces operated, many rural East Timorese sought refuge – perhaps paradoxically - in the larger towns, i. e. Dili and Baucau, where Indonesian power was unchallenged. At lower levels of Indonesian-controlled commerce and bureaucracy there were also

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277 Budiardjo & Liong, op. cit., p. 104.
278 Ibid, p. 110.
279 Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
281 Ibid, p. 212.
opportunities for locals to gain employment when these sectors expanded rapidly as a result of the demands of the occupying armed forces and administration.

The unplanned massive flow of rural people into Dili may have laid the ground for intra-Timorese conflicts in the future. Many newcomers simply cleared some land and built a house, since there were no land titles. The war, and the Indonesian army’s subsequent attempt to defeat Falintil, was mainly concentrated in the eastern half of the territory, leading naturally to great numbers of easterners, i.e. firaku, to Dili. This led to a worsening of already existing residual tensions between kaladi and firaku (cf ch. 6), where the latter were seen by many as unwanted squatters, even if they, as time passed, stayed in the same spot for decades. This situation eventually led to violent clashes which, while triggered by scores of other circumstances, devastated large parts of Dili and turned tens of thousands into internal refugees during the crisis of 2006. On a lesser scale, urban violence between groups erupted in 1975, 1980 and in the 1990’s.

Whether they came from east or west, the newcomers in many cases “brought the countryside with them”. A team of researchers led by Robert Muggah has described Dili as an ‘urban village’ – a set of interconnected and clustered villages that represent extensions of rural communities in an urbanized setting. Muggah argues that the age-old tradition of armed followers of liurais, ‘the big man and his cohort’, during this process was transplanted into the urban setting, but now with the ‘big man’, i.e. liurai, exchanged for a gang- or militia leader.282 These groups accounted for a great deal of crime and violence in Dili, and for the undermining of social cohesion. Some were also exploited by the Indonesian army as their armed thugs. In addition to the auxiliary forces established earlier, Ratih and Hansip, the Indonesians in the mid-1980’s began to create a small number of highly trained paramilitary units under Kopassus (Komando Pasukan Khusus, Special Troops Command, the Red Berets under yet another name) control, in Dili and other towns. The three first were Team Alfa, Team Sera and Team Saka.283 Not only were they controlled by Kopassus, each of them also had Kopassus officers as members.284

They also contained a high percentage of defected fighters from Falintil who, for various reasons, had chosen to side with the Indonesians. This made these teams deadlier than others, with their inside knowledge of the armed resistance. These groups performed a variety of duties, including reconnaissance, intelligence, combat and assassinations. They often worked in tandem with the feared Nanggalas (known as knife-killers), special Kopassus groups which were known for their excess brutality, often shown at gruesome public executions.285 All of these Timorese paramilitary groups will turn up later in this book, as unleashed, violent forces in late 1999.286

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282 Ibid., p. 21.
283 Joanico Cecario, a former TBO (cf. Ch. 10) was appointed leader of Saka by the Indonesians. Having lost his father in the war, he had been ‘adopted’ by ABRI, and volunteered to serve in an auxiliary force under Kopassus, which was eventually rewarded by him being given a commanding position as a militia boss. (Geoffrey Robinson, ‘People’s war: Militias in East Timor and Indonesia’, South East Asia Research, 9, 3, pp. 271-318, London: The University, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South East Asia.
284 According to James Dunn, both Tim Alfa and Tim Saka was set up by a Captain Luhud Pandjaitan, on orders from Prabowo Subianto, hitherto in this story best known as the killer of Nicolau Lobato and son-in-law of Suharto (Dunn 2001, op. cit., p. 11).
285 Robinson, op. cit., p. 299.
The West – an increase of awareness

In spite of the visible *pempangunan*, and the supposedly grateful East Timorese, East Timor remained closed to foreigners, apart from the by now habitual and well-organised visits controlled by the Indonesian authorities. At times, however, it was possible for the occasional reporter to get a glimpse of life beyond the tightly controlled façade. Such was the case when in January 1985 three foreign reporters were allowed in. As usual, the reporters were taken on an organised tour of the territory. As one of the reporters, Steven Jones of *The Wall Street Journal*, wrote, ‘reporters flitting from place to place by helicopter are unable to gauge accurately the level of fighting.’\(^{287}\) All information given to the three reporters, save for one exception, came from Indonesian officials or the Indonesian-appointed Governor, Mario Carrascalão. The exception was when Peter Millership of Reuters, in an interview with Bishop Belo was told about the Kraras massacre. Belo said that he himself had visited the village and that some of the survivors of the massacre had compiled a list of the victims and given it to him.\(^{288}\)

About the same time, the Council of Catholic Priests in East Timor in a written statement told of regularly occurring ‘clearing-up’ operations, with children being used in ‘fence of legs’ operations. The statement also made mention of mass arrests, of ‘Indonesianisation’ of the administration and of the suppression of Christianity and Animism. The statement was subsequently published in Australia and England, and a detailed account of the Kraras massacre was published by TAPOL in April 1985.\(^{289}\) In February 1985, a five-person delegation from the West German parliament, in spite of the usual rigorous security arrangements – or perhaps because of this – concluded that “generally speaking, the whole island appears to be under arrest.”\(^{290}\)

In order to facilitate – and make legal - the flow of information from within East Timor to the outside world – emanating from the radio transmitter that was smuggled into Timor in late 1984 - the Australian Coalition for East Timor (ACET) applied to the Australian government in mid-1985 for radio transmitter and receiver licences to communicate with the guerrillas. The applications were rejected by the minister for communications, Michael Duffy. ACET then decided to reapply under a new Radio Communications Act and they also launched an appeal for a “Let East Timor Speak Fund.” In this they were supported by the Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, which passed a resolution in September 1985, which supported the struggle of the East Timorese people, and specifically urged the Australian Labor Government “to grant a licence to allow this radio link to operate and thus provide journalists, and other interested bodies and individuals, the right to speak to the resistance forces to gain their views on the situation in East Timor.”\(^{291}\) Not heeding these advices, the Australian government instead, on October 27, began discussions with Indonesia re a joint Timor Gap exploration programme which on December 9, 1985, resulted in a statement that such a plan was now under development.\(^{292}\)

Reflecting the increasing involvement of Catholic circles in the ‘East Timor question’, the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) in London convened an international conference on East Timor in 1985. Out of this conference came a “Declaration on Behalf of East Timor”, which stated that the territory of East Timor had been illegally occupied by Indonesia since December 1975, “inflicting extreme loss of life and destruction.” The

\(^{289}\) Taylor 1990, p. 51.
\(^{290}\) Retbøll 1987, op. cit., p. 29.
\(^{291}\) Ibid, p. 40.
statement condemned the human rights violations committed since 1975, and recognized that
the East Timorese had been denied their right to self-determination, and affirmed that
negotiations would not lead to a just settlement unless they 1), involve representatives of the
East Timorese people including those who resist the present occupation, 2) secure an end to
hostilities which prevent the people of East Timor and their representatives from contributing
freely to negotiations leading to self-determination, 3) provide internationally acceptable
conditions of access to relief and development agencies and to independent visitors,
journalists and diplomats, and 4) include an act of self-determination which is free from
interference and verified by international observers acceptable to the East Timorese people.293

This statement is interesting in that it shows the synchronization of the processes of
resistance within East Timor and among supporters on the outside, as it is virtually a copy of
the peace-plan laid out by Xanana’s delegation at the talks which led to the cease-fire in
August 1983.

And it didn’t end there. In June 1985, following an initiative from TAPOL, 427
parliamentarians from a number of western democracies signed a declaration, stressing that
the UN-sponsored negotiations must involve representatives of the East Timorese people,
they must secure an end to hostilities, they must provide internationally accepted conditions
of access to relief and development agencies and to independent visitors, journalists and
diplomats, and, above all, they must involve an act of self-determination which is free from
interference and verified by international observers acceptable to the East Timorese people.

Also in June 1985, Bishop Belo visited Rome, for his first audience with the Pope, and
came away quoting his spiritual master as saying that “East Timor presents the most difficult
problem in the world.” John Paul II told him to ‘fight the suffering of the people and seek a
right solution for Timor’. But the Pope also told him that “… on the other hand, the Church
in Indonesia also needs our attention.”294 Belo also, while in Rome, visited the Portuguese
embassy for a meeting with Prime Minister Mario Soares, to whom the bishop, apparently
successfully, presented Fretilin as a nationalist movement, thereby diminishing the
Communist connotations that the name Fretilin hitherto had evoked in Portugal. The meeting
between Bishop Belo and the Pope was followed by a letter of support in late August from
Cardinal O’Connor of New York, on behalf of the United States Catholic Bishops’
Conference.295 Influenced by the Vatican or not, Bishop Belo made few public statements
during the following three and a half years, leading many among the resistance to believe that
he had bowed to pressure from the Vatican.296

In October of 1985, a UN Under-Secretary-General did hold a first informal meeting with
the Fretilin representative, José Ramos Horta, in New York, but went no further than to
inform him of the progress of negotiations with Indonesia and Portugal. The two countries
had had their first formal contacts one month earlier, following a secret round of meetings
under UN auspices since July 1983.297 There was really no progress to report, the main
progress being that this meeting was being held at all.

294 Kohen, op. cit., p.
296 Kohen, op. Cit.
297 The secrecy was deemed necessary from both sides since Portugal broke diplomatic relations with Indonesia
immediately after the invasion in December 1975, and Indonesia’s stance was that Timor Timur was a strictly
internal affair since its formal integration with Indonesia in May 1976.
The paradox of colonialism

Basically, we can discern two different processes from the above. While Indonesian power is continually strengthened, deepened and more far-reaching, so is the resistance against it. Benedict Anderson has pointed out the ironical logic of colonialism. The means by which the oppressor tries to win ‘the hearts and minds’ of the oppressed – health centres, an improved schools system, ‘model villages’, better roads etc. - are also the means which makes the oppressed aware of being a creature essentially different from the oppressor. Paradoxically, the consciousness of being East Timorese spread rapidly after the early 1980s, precisely because of the state’s expansion, because of the new schools and the development projects.298 Compared to Portuguese colonialism, Indonesian power was infinitely more penetrating, infinitely more widespread, in the smallest villages, and was represented by hundreds of military posts and a huge intelligence apparatus. In Anderson’s words, all this combined to create a situation where “a profound sense of commonality emerged from the gaze of the colonial state.”299

One aspect of the state’s expansion was that the young Timorese gained access to still one more language, Bahasa Indonesia, and along with the language also came greater possibilities for communication with other Timorese as well as with the outside world.300 Benedict Anderson notes that for young Indonesian intellectuals at the turn of the century, the Dutch language “performed the absolutely essential function of getting natives out of the prison of local ethnic languages.”301 In East Timor, Bahasa Indonesia had a similar function. The irony had come full circle.

A growing body of literature,

The growing number of people abroad who were taking an interest in East Timor, by now had access to a growing body of literature on the subject from where to gather information; information which earlier to a large extent had to be searched for in a largely uninterested mainstream media or from ‘specialist’ sources, such as pamphlets emanating from support groups or left-wing organizations.

From the period of decolonization in 1974 and onwards, there appeared upon the scene a number of books of a political nature. Most of these can be said to be pro-Fretilin (in regards to the main contender for political power at the time, i. e. UDT), and all take sides with the East Timorese in the conflict with Indonesia.

Not surprisingly, these books emanated mainly from Portugal and Australia, with Portugal taking the lead with the self-explanatory title *Autópsia de uma tragédia* (1977), written by Luis Filipe F. R. Thomaz. The odd one out (but only from a strictly geographical perspective, the support for East Timor soon became, as we have seen, truly transnational) was the French *Timor Oriental*, by Marcel Roger, with a postface by José Ramos Horta. Jill Jolliffe writes in detail about Fretilin and the period prior to the invasion in her *East Timor, Nationalism and Colonialism* (1978). Helen Hill’s *FRETILIN: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement in East Timor* (1978) deals, as the title implies, with the background and development of Fretilin. Bill

299 Ibid.
300 Ibid.
301 Still, almost two-thirds of East Timorese women had no schooling at all, and those who attended school did so for an average of less than one year. Only 54.7% were able to speak Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia (Sissons, 1997, op. cit., p. 8.)
301 Anderson, op. cit., p. 35.
Nicol, in *Timor: The Stillborn Nation* (1978) covers the same period as Jolliffe, but is alone among the writers of this period in his strongly critical view of Fretilin.

Coming out of the first international seminar on East Timor (in May 1979) is Noam Chomsky’s short (eight pages) but biting *East Timor and the Western Democracies*, a commentary on Western hypocrisy and the dismissal of East Timor as ‘not interesting’ by a press that otherwise prides itself of being free and critical. Arnold Kohen and John Taylor in *An Act of Genocide: Indonesia’s Invasion of East Timor* (1979) describe the horrors of the war. In 1980 came Kevin Sherlock’s indispensable *A Bibliography of Timor*, containing some 280 pages of works that in one way or another related to Timor.

James Dunn’s *Timor, a People Betrayed* (1983) covers a wide scope, including a historical background and a very informed analysis of *Operasi Komodo* and the international political game in which Portuguese Timor was but a pawn, but his narrative ends with the situation as it was in 1982. James Dunn is a former Australian consul in Portuguese Timor, and as such has a rich first-hand experience of the territory - as had Jill Jolliffe, Helen Hill and Bill Nicol, albeit with shorter durations of stay. Also in 1983, Pat Walsh and John Waddingham started a magazine, *Inside Indonesia*, with the aim of broadening Australians’ understanding of Indonesia in general, not just the question of East Timor. In the same year in Portugal there came out *Timor-Leste. Mensagem aos Vivos*, by António Barbedo de Magalhães, and the earlier mentioned *The Timor Drama* by João Loff Barreto.

Echoing an increasing awareness of East Timor in various countries, the Danish IWGIA (the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) published detailed accounts of the early years of occupation in *East Timor, Indonesia and the Western Democracies* and *East Timor: the Struggle Continues*, from 1980 and 1984 respectively, compiled from a wide variety of sources, from newspaper articles to statements at the UN. From 1984 is *The War Against East Timor* by the founders of TAPOL, Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong. It deals, as the title implies, mostly with the occupation period, but does so in great detail and with special insights into the workings of the Indonesian administration and military in East Timor. This book contains the classified Indonesian counter-insurgency documents that Fretilin got hold of and smuggled out of East Timor. Also from TAPOL came *East Timor and the Shaming of the West* (1985) by Alexander George, a work which is, again, highly critical of “western politics and western mainstream media’s general lack of information about ET, and willingness to distribute Indonesia’s version”.

In 1985 Amnesty International published a book, aptly titled *East Timor. Violations of Human Rights. Extrajudicial executions, ‘disappearances’, torture and political imprisonment*. In it names are given of about 500 people who have ‘disappeared’ after arrest and after being taken from detention centres and prisons. There is also a long list of people who have been extrajudicially executed, and details are given of methods of torture being used to obtain confessions from detainees. Conditions on Ataúro island are well described, as well as the situation in the resettlement villages. From that same year is also Björn Larsson’s *Det grymma spelet* (The Cruel Game), where he details the role of Sweden in the period 1975-1985.

José Ramos Horta’s writings, for instance his MA thesis *East Timor: A Case Study in International Law* (1984), and *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* are highly informative about the legal aspects of the ‘East Timor question’, about ‘the games nations play’ and the East Timorese view of the conflict. Worth noting is that the foreword to Horta’s book is written by Noam Chomsky who has also provided forewords to the issues by IWGIA and the Kohen and Taylor penned book. Chomsky belongs, together with Herb Feith and Richard Tanter in Australia, Barbedo de Magalhães in Portugal and John Taylor in England, to the miniscule number of academic figures of rank who have taken an active interest in the East Timor question. Herb Feith at an early stage linked East Timor to the West Papua.
conflict, and saw both as parts of ‘an Indonesia-wide miscellany of human rights issues’, as various opposition groups and NGO’s in Indonesia itself were also to do in the 1990s.

The Indonesian viewpoint, showing a strong bias toward the other perspective, can be found in works such as *Integrasi* (1976), *Process of Decolonization in East Timor* (1977), *The Province of East Timor: Development in Progress* (1981), *East Timor After Integration* (1984), and *Economic and Social Development in East Timor Province* (1986). All of these are official publications, issued by the Republic of Indonesia. As far as I know, there is no published work in defence of Indonesia’s integration of East Timor which has been written outside of Indonesia, apart from an editorial by Nuno Rocha ‘Timor and the Honour of the Nation’ in the Lisbon weekly *O Tempo* on 13 August 1986.

The East Timor question in regard to international law has been further elaborated on in articles such as Thomas Franck and Paul Hoffman’s ‘The Right of Self-determination in very Small Places’ (1976), and Roger Clark’s, ‘The “Decolonisation” of East Timor and the United Nations Norms on Self-determination and Aggression’ (1980), ‘East Timor and International Law’ (1984), and Keith Suter’s ‘International Law and East Timor’ (1978).

The above-mentioned titles by no means comprise an exhaustive listing of the existing literature on East Timor in the mid-1980s, a body of literature which moreover continued to grow with a number of titles each year (Horta’s *Funu* came in 1987). Admittedly, some of them may have been a bit hard to come by, but most weren’t. Add to this the increasing number of well-informed publications coming out of the support organisations, and it is not an exaggeration to say that by the mid- to late 1980’s there was ample information to be found for those non-Timorese who so wished – and quite a few did so, and also acted upon the information thus gained.
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12. A clandestine nation

A realignment of East Timorese political forces

By 1986 results could clearly be seen of the processes that were initialled in 1981 by the re-directioning of the political/military struggle towards involvement of all strata of the population, and which were further strengthened during the cease-fire in 1983, the purge of Fretilin hard-liners in 1984, plus the increasing importance of the Catholic Church. One sign of the latter was that in April 1986, Father Locatelli, a Salesian priest, arranged a meeting between fellow Salesian Bishop Belo and resistance leader Xanana Gusmão.¹ Another was that in Portugal the Catholic Church linked support group APLT-L (Associacão Paz e Justica para Timor-Leste, Association, Peace and Justice for East Timor), in 1986 co-organised the first in a series of debates about East Timor that in 1989 eventually led to the formation of the yearly Jornadas de Timor da Universidade do Porto (Symposium on Timor of the University of Porto).²

By then, João Boavida writes, a new breed of East Timorese students had emerged, a generation brought up under Indonesian occupation and in a climate of pancasila oriented values. He notes the irony (again the irony!) in that they were now the ones who were leading the struggle, in place of "the most able senior citizens and nationalists of the pre-invasion period".³ A majority of whom had been killed anyway, I may add.⁴

One of the new leaders was Constâncio Pinto. A guerilla already at the age of fifteen, he was captured at Remexio in September 1978 (during the battle when Fretilin’s former president Xavier do Amaral was captured by/surrendered to the Indonesians). The young Constâncio was among those lucky enough to survive; he also learned to speak Bahasa and became a TBO, tenag bantuan operasi, a carrier or servant, for a police commander (cf. Ch. 10.) After a few months he was allowed to move to Dili, where he continued his education at Externato de St. José, the one remaining Portuguese school. While acting the innocent student, he was one of those who began to actively support the guerrilla movement in the mountains.

It all started at the end of the cease-fire in 1983, when a small number of young people in the towns decided that, if possible, it was time to start supporting the armed resistance. In a similar fashion as the clandestine meetings outside the government building in the early

¹ By all accounts, the meeting was not characterized by mutual trust and understanding. Xanana Gusmão was under the impression that Belo, pressured by the Papal Nunzio in Jakarta, was suggesting that he give up the military struggle. Belo, on his side, says that he told Gusmão to focus on the political rather than the military struggle, which could not be won in any case. While opposition towards Belo from within the armed resistance softened as time went by, according to Arnold Cohen “hard feelings never completely vanished” (Kohen, op. cit., pp. 158-159.)
⁴ There were approximately 40,000 orphaned children in East Timor in 1985/1986, a clear indication of the level of violence since the invasion in December 1975. Some 2,000 were adopted and taken to Indonesia by Indonesian soldiers, and an equal number were transferred to institutions in Indonesia by foundations such as the one established by Suharto in 1976 (Helene van Klinken, Making Them Indonesians. Child Transfers out of East Timor. Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2012, pp. xxiii-xxviii).
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1970’s, young people gathered, talked, drank coffee, played music and dreamed of a future rid of foreign oppression. It was a gradual process, and it was some time before a few of them met with a former guerilla fighter, Toko, who now resided in Dili and still had contacts in the bush. Through Toko the youngsters got in touch with Falintil commander David Alex, Mau Hudo, vice chairman of Fretilin, and Taur Matan Ruak, the chief staff commander of Falintil. Eventually, David Alex endorsed in early 1985 the formation of a small cell of seven people, with Constâncio Pinto as its leader, and bearing the illustrious and appropriate title (for a clandestine operation) of 007.5

The activities of this and later groups consisted of sending messages to Portugal and Australia, and sending supplies and information to the guerillas. It was information itself, ranging from Indonesian troop movements to global politics, that was the most valuable ‘item’ passed on to the resistance in the bush. News from the outside world was received via shortwave radio or from sources within the Catholic Church.

As time passed by, several similar groups were started, not only in Dili, but also in Aileu, Manatuto, Baucau, Same and other places, all situated along major roads where communication had been facilitated by the cease-fire, and all working independently of each other. Each group had contact with a guerilla leader, David Alex in the case of 007. While this organization made it extremely difficult for the Indonesians to infiltrate or keep track of this burgeoning clandestine movement, it also made it equally difficult to organize concerted actions based on co-operation between different groups. To overcome this, 007, together with a number of other cells across the territory – one of them being OJECTIL (the Organisation of Catholic East Timorese Youth and Students), led by Gregorio Saldanha - in 1987 formed another organisation, Orgão Oito (Organ Eight), with a collective leadership.6

This increasing level of co-operation was reflected also abroad, though perhaps more in words than in deeds, when in 1986 the so called Convergence was declared, in which UDT and Fretilin officially declared their future co-operation towards their common goal, self-determination for East Timor. After years of bitter resentment Fretilin and UDT issued, on 24 March 1986, a Joint Statement in Lisbon, expressing their decision to take joint action in defence of the interests of all Timorese people, and to work towards the installation of a democratic, Western-style regime in East Timor. The statement also affirmed the importance of Portugal’s role, by virtue of the responsibilities vested in her by the Portuguese Constitution (cf. section 11.3.) and by International law. The joint statement was signed by Abílio Araújo, Chief of the External Delegation of Fretilin, and Moises da Costa Amaral, President of the UDT Political Commission.7

The Joint Statement (and, as we shall soon see, the creation of CNRM) was the signal for UDT to become more public in the international arena, where Fretilin representatives had up until then been East Timor’s only voice. At the UN Decolonisation Committee in New York on 4 September 1987 João Carrascalão rebuked the Indonesian claims that UDT had requested Indonesia’s intervention. He also denounced the Balibo declaration, saying that the signatories ‘were coercively extracted from some of us, and then lodged in a secluded hotel in Denpasar, Bali,’ and described the integration ceremony by the People’s Assembly in May 1976 as a farce.

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As for the economic development which Carrascalão admitted had taken place in East Timor, Carrascalão rhetorically asked if the Namibian people should forsake their right to independence just because the Government of South Africa has built asphalt roads, schools and hospitals in Namibia?8 Ahead of Carrascalão’s personal appearance at the UN, the UDT issued on 13 August 1987 a formal statement, addressed to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, which read as follows:

The documents widely circulated by Indonesia dateline from localities inside our country, were in fact prepared in the decision centres in Jakarta; The signatures on these documents were coercively extracted from some of us, then lodged in a secluded hotel in Denpasar, Bali. The so-called “People’s Assembly” allegedly elected in May 1976 which “voted” for integration of our country in Indonesia. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, allow us to share with you our own experience how we witnessed this entire farce. Indonesian helicopters picked a few individuals in a few districts then under Indonesian military occupation, flew them to Dili, were herded together with a few other elements hand-picked from the streets of Dili and then they were all proclaimed elected. It was this “assembly” picked up by air force helicopters, by military vehicles in the streets of Dili, that Indonesia used to claim that Timor was integrated in Indonesia through due democratic process.9

In November 1987, Carrascalão represented UDT at the first Christian Consultative Conference for Asia and the Pacific in Manila, which called for direct Timorese participation in talks to resolve the conflict.10

The Convergence may not have reflected a spirit of true reconciliation between the two groups, but it certainly cleared the way for further developments in the direction towards a more concerted struggle for self-determination among the East Timorese. A major step in that direction was when Xanana Gusmão (together with the exiled José Ramos Horta) restyled the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance, CRRN, into CNRM (Conselho Nacional de Resistência Maubere, National Council of Maubere Resistance), intended to be a politically non-aligned umbrella organisation for the liberation struggle. Having removed some important opposition figures in 1984, this was a step further towards removing the resistance struggle from Fretilin control. The final step was taken on December 7, 1987, when Gusmão issued an address to the people of East Timor (commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion) in which he attacked the Central Committee of Fretilin for having committed “enormous and excessive political errors.” The Central Committee, he said, had been guilty of “political infantilism” and doctrinaire Marxism, and had “paid no attention to our concrete situation and limitations.”11 On New Year’s Eve, 1988, the changes were presented in the document Reajustamento Estrutural da Resistência e Proposta de Paz (the Restructure of the Resistance and Peace Proposal), or RER for short.12 At the same time, Xanana formally announced his resignation from Fretilin.13

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8 UDT, Statement by the delegation of the Timorese Democratic Union to the Special Committee on Decolonization New York, 13 August 1987. Lisbon: União Democrática Timorense Comité Central Departamento de Relações Exteriores.
9 Ibid.
10 CAVR, Chapter 7, Self Determination, 2006, p. 86.
Not unexpectedly, the already existing rift between Gusmão and Fretilin deepened by this decision and, as Shoesmith points out, has never been repaired. During this process, Fretilin lost its absolute control of the resistance – especially so since Falintil was now firmly the armed wing of CNRM - while on the other hand doors were opened towards a regeneration of the resistance, based upon a clandestine movement based in towns and villages, of which the above-mentioned small cell 007 was an early example.

The Chilean diplomat Juan Federer, long-time supporter of East Timor’s struggle for self-determination and aide to José Ramos Horta (and also the person who smuggled a radio transmitter into East Timor in 1984), in a critical re-assessment of CNRM in 2005, describes the organisation as having an existence more on paper than in reality. Still, it served a useful purpose:

The so-called council was never properly set up, nor did it have periodic meetings, nor did it adopt policy decisions. There was no clear structure defined. There were no definitions of functions or responsibilities spelled out, nor were there meeting and internal information communications procedures defined. Nevertheless, it was a necessary and useful symbol, which allowed us to fit into expected international moulds as a representative national liberation movement.15

Not least important was that Xanana Gusmão, as leader of the CNRM, now emerged as the “central unifying figure of East Timorese nationalism, and the principal inspirational figure for the young anti-integrationists who were brought up within the Indonesian school system, as well as for those in the Timorese Diaspora.” Following these changes on a political level, Xanana Gusmão followed up in early 1988 by moving his eastern camps to more central positions, thereby moving the armed resistance closer to the larger towns and villages.

The changes within the East Timorese resistance were not readily accepted by the DFSE (Delegação da Fretilin em Service no Exterior, the Fretilin Delegation for Overseas Service). Abílio Araújo rejected the changes, particularly the removal of the armed wing of the resistance from Fretilin, and accused Gusmão of being disrespectful to the memory of East Timor’s national heroes. Also Rogério Lobato did not accept the lesser position for Fretilin within the resistance. Xanana Gusmão’s relationship with DFSE thus became increasingly fraught, and without support from inside Timor, DFSE were in an untenable position. Those abroad would have to decide how they were going to support the new-style resistance. Finally, Fretilin leaders inside East Timor replaced Araújo and others among the exiled Fretilin leadership with CDF (Comissão Diretiva da Fretilin, Directive Commission of Fretilin), consisting of a secretary, Ma’Huno, and three deputies, Lu Olu, Mau Hudo and Konis Santana. This was based on the argument that those fighting the war on the inside should not take orders from those on the outside. On the contrary, those on the outside should follow the guidelines from those on the inside. From that time, Xanana Gusmão completely bypassed the DFSE, and instead sent reports and documents from East Timor to supporters in Portugal directly to CDPM (Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere, Commission for

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17 Niner, op. cit., p.114.
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the Rights of the Maubere People, cf. chapter 11.) This also meant that the problem with an external front and a diplomatic and a strained relation between the two was resolved. Horta’s role became increasingly important, while the DFSE took a backseat to the clandestine front in East Timor and Indonesia.

An important step was also taken in Portugal in June of 1988, when a combined group of UK and Japanese parliamentarians visited Portugal for meetings with Portuguese counterparts, resulting in the establishment of Parliamentarians for East Timor. Chaired by Lord Avebury, this organisation was to take an important role in spreading information and co-ordinating activities re East Timor on the international arena during the coming years.

Clandestine resistance.

The clandestine resistance gradually came to consist of four distinct branches. The first branch worked closely to the armed guerrilla, ready to take up arms at short notice in place of captured or killed combatants, or when a supply of weapons became available. They also supplied the guerrillas with clothing, food, medicine and passed information to the guerrillas, and from the guerrillas to other branches of the clandestine movement. The second branch operated in urban areas and fulfilled several functions. It informed the increasing number (especially since 1989) of foreign visitors about the situation in East Timor, organised demonstrations and smuggled information in and out of Timor. Both these branches consisted of small groups, where a designated member had contact with only one member of another group, thereby minimizing the risk for the whole cell if anybody was caught by the Indonesians.

The third branch focused on promoting East Timorese economic interests and attempting to resist the cultural aspects of Indonesian rule. They canvassed for more employment and business opportunities, and they protested against corruption in the bureaucracy. The Catholic Church, under the leadership of Bishop Belo, could be seen as part of this branch, in its often open critique of the Indonesian occupiers economic and social politics and in its (albeit indirect) promoting of a distinct East Timorese cultural identity. The fourth branch of the resistance was based at Indonesian universities, in Jakarta, Bandung, Denpasar, Yogyakarta etc., where an increasing number of East Timorese enrolled. Many among these students attempted to have the East Timor issue debated in Indonesia, and to link the oppression in Timor with the Indonesian students and human rights groups struggle for democracy in their own country. They did so under the constant threat of losing their scholarships if the Indonesian authorities found out about their activities.

The students in Indonesia and in East Timor organised themselves as Renetil (Resistência Nacional dos Estudantes do Timor-Leste, National Resistance Organisation of East Timorese Students). Renetil was formed on June 20, 1988. Domingos Sarmento Alves, in an interview explains how RENETIL came about:

20 Magalhães & Liong, op. cit., p. 12.
21 The cultural aspect was highlighted in a speech by Xanana Gusmão in 2006, where he said that “during the war of resistance we used to say: if the bullets don’t kill us, rice and supermi (Indonesian noodles) will; the bullets can only kill your body, but the rupiahs, rice and supermi destroy your soul.” (‘Message by. H. E. the President of the Republic.’ http://www.themonthly.com.au/files/xanana_speech.pdf)
When we heard that scholarships were being given to study in Indonesia, lots of us applied ... I was in the first group of nine sent to Java. After several years, we began to discuss how we could work for independence. That’s how RENETIL was born. Fernando de Araújo, a student in Bali, was elected the first secretary of our organisation. We told Xanana about our plans and he gave us his consent. My task was to recruit students as more and more East Timorese students started arriving in Java and Bali.

Renetil was to play a major role in publicizing the ‘East Timor question’ Indonesia and internationally. The organisation operated according to three main strategies; to isolate East Timorese students from the economic, social, political, and cultural influence of the Indonesian regime; communicating the criminality of Indonesia’s occupation to the outside world; and preparing East Timorese professionals to return and help build an independent East Timor. The creation of Renetil also made the flow of information out of East Timor a lot easier. A major problem of the solidarity movement abroad (and for the East Timorese on the outside) had always been how to get reliable information out of East Timor. Apart from the earlier described contacts through radio, or letters distributed abroad by Church officials, the usual way of getting information out was called estafeta, in which information from the resistance in the interior was brought by couriers to Dili. From Dili the letters, photos and other communications were smuggled to Indonesia and on to Portugal or Australia. The easy part of this transportation was that from Indonesia to the final destination. During the early years of Indonesian occupation of East Timor, the estafeta could take months, by the late eighties it was often done within a fortnight. When a set of satellite phones were smuggled inside East Timor it became, despite the high costs, a further improvement in communications with the outside world. Oppression continued, but East Timor was no longer isolated.

‘Openness’, resistance and internationalisation.

In December 1988, in response to a request by Governor Mário Carrascalão earlier in the year, and in face of strong opposition within the military, President Suharto signed Presidential decree No. 62, 1988 granting the province of East Timor “equal status” with the other 26 provinces of Indonesia. Indonesia had a specific reason to improve its international image at that time, namely the aspiration of Suharto to occupy the chair position of the Non-Aligned Movement. Being a founding nation of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Indonesian Government had suffered an embarrassing diplomatic setback at the August 1976 Summit Conference on the Non-Aligned Nations, held in Sri Lanka, whose final communiqué listed East Timor among non-self-governing countries still to be liberated. This was reaffirmed at the 1979 conference held in Cuba. The Non-Aligned-Nations meeting in Luanda, Angola in 1985, was major setback to Indonesia, as Suharto was not elected chairman of the organisation, an idea planted earlier in the same year at a lavish celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Bandung meeting, attended by a larger number of Third World leaders. If Suharto had been elected chairman, this would have meant a blow to Fretilin and the ‘East Timor question’ within the movement. It did not, however, turn out that way. Angola invited Fretilin to the meeting – a first ever at such an occasion – and the debate on East Timor in the

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24 Magalhães & Liong, op. cit., p.11
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Political Commission lasted five hours. As a result, Suharto was not elected chairman, in spite of massive lobbying to that effect by a large group Indonesian diplomats. While this was a success for Fretilin, José Ramos Horta notes dryly that at the same time the debate exposed the double standards and hypocrisy found also within the Non-Aligned Movement, when it had to handle aggression among its own ranks, as opposed to when the culprit was a former colonial power. Many member states, notably so the Arab bloc, sided with Indonesia over East Timor, and the Yugoslavian delegate made a statement in which he referred to East Timor as a ‘corps’ that should not be ‘resurrected’.  

Feith suggests that the decision to grant the territory special status may also have reflected a wish by Suharto to discredit Defence Minister Benny Murdani. Murdani had strongly argued for the invasion in 1975, while Suharto had been reluctant to give the orders for military intervention. Murdani had been the principal architect of the invasion and remained the central figure in Jakarta’s occupation policy. By 1988, however, he had defected from the President’s inner circle and his influence began to wane. In February 1988, Murdani was finally ordered to hand over command of ABRI to General Try Sutrisno.

For whatever reason, on 1 January 1989 the Indonesian government issued Decree No. 62, in which it was officially declared that East Timor was no longer a closed, tertutup, province, but an open, terbuka, one, on a footing with provinces in other parts of Indonesia. The decision was to be a watershed in the history of East Timor. One immediate effect of the removal of barriers to travel in and out of Timor Timur, was that information began to be carried out by travellers, making communication with the outside world significantly easier.

In February 1989, soon after the opening up of East Timor, Bishop Belo wrote a number of letters to foreign dignitaries, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Portuguese president Mario Soares and the Pope, John Paul II, denouncing human rights abuses in East Timor and requesting a UN-supervised referendum. In the letter to the UN Secretary-General, he wrote:

The decolonisation of East Timor has still not been resolved by the United Nations. The people of Timor must be allowed to express their views on their future in a plebiscite. Hitherto the people have not been consulted. Others speak in the name of the people. Indonesia says that the people of Timor have already chosen integration but the people of Timor themselves have never said this. Portugal wants to let time solve the problem. And we continue to die as a people and a nation.

Belo’s letter to the UN became public in April, leading to a prompt denouncement by military spokesmen, politicians and church officials in Indonesia. The Papal Nuncio in Jakarta, Archbishop Canalini, publicly stated that the letter did not represent the Indonesian Catholic

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31 Federer, op. cit., p. 43.
32 This outburst of activity followed a period when Belo had kept a low profile for some time, interpreted by some as "apparent indifference". During this period some East Timorese turned to the Red Cross rather than to the bishop’s house when protection was acutely needed. This period of seeming “irrelevance” ended with the letters alluded to above (Andrew McMillan, Death in Dili. Rydalmere, NSW: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992, pp. 83-84).
33 Feith, op. cit., p. 6.
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Church’s view on the matter, and also made the threat that the Pope would not go through with a planned visit to East Timor if Belo did not retract the letter.34

A number of Timorese were immediately arrested, probably because they were believed to be associated with Bishop Belo’s letters. Further arrests took place in the following months. In September, Bishop Belo estimated that at least fifty-five people had been detained since April.35

As so many times before, the Vatican reacted in a way intended to keep a firm grip on the leash of individuals who strayed outside of its official (non-)policy on East Timor. When the Bishop of Setubal, Portugal, Dom Manuel da Silva Martins, reacted to Belo’s letter by collecting 160 signatories in a letter of support to the UN, Cardinal Casaroli forbade him to send this letter, and also forbade him to speak publicly about East Timor. It honours da Silva Martins that he did not concur.36 Also disobedient was Bishop Soma of Nagoya, who collected the signatories of 1257 church leaders from the Asia-Pacific region and personally presented the petition in support of Belo’s letter to the UN in August 1989.

This new openness enabled clandestine groups of youths, such as OJECTIL,37, Fitun, Renetil and OJILATIL (Organisacão Popular Juventude Lorico As’wain Timor Leste, The Popular Organization of Timorese Youth Lorikeet Warriors, founded in 1995) to be founded and to co-operate throughout East Timor at the end of 1980’s/first half of the 1990’s. Before that, people who were organized in small groups had an awareness very much limited to their own cells. Sometimes they felt lonely and isolated:

“Are we the only ones who struggle for these things? What about the others?” When the protest movement started, people suddenly opened their minds and their vision: “We are not the only ones who are fighting for self-determination! There are others!”38

East Timorese students in Indonesian universities now also established clandestine groups. Added to the previously founded Renetil were now FLECLETIL (Frente Clandestina Estudantil dos Estudantes de Timor Leste, the clandestine front of East Timor students), LEP (Liga Estudantes Patriotas, the League of Patriotic Students) and Impettu (Ikatan Mahasiswa dan Pelajar Timor-Timur, East Timor Students Association.) The latter was not a clandestine group, but a government-sponsored, formally non-political student organization with a required membership. It had been founded already in 1980, so that Indonesian intelligence could keep an eye on the activities of East Timorese youth at universities in Jakarta or Bali. Even so, Impettu was at times used as a curtina (curtain) for some members’ political activities.39

Public demonstrations organized by Renetil and other clandestine youth groups became common from 1989 and onwards, these often planned to coincide with the arrival of foreign journalists. Apart from demonstrations, another way of showing their dissatisfaction with the situation in East Timor (and a way to escape from it) was to seek asylum at various embassies in Jakarta, leading to an endlessly embarrassing situation for the Indonesian authorities, as well as growing attention in the world at large. On 19 June 1989 six students sought, and were

34 Kohen, op. cit., p. 173.
35 Timor Link, op. cit.
36 CAVR, 2006, Chapter 7, Self Determination, pp. 72-73.
37 OJECTIL later became OJETIL, when the ‘C’ for ‘Catholic’ was deleted.
refused, political asylum in the Vatican and Japanese embassies in Jakarta. Even though this action was unsuccessful, it marked the beginning of a long line of similar, and successful, actions.

On 1 September 1989, 100 students from East Timor who were studying in Indonesia signed a statement addressed to the UN Secretary-General. The statement demanded self-determination for East Timor’s people, denounced Indonesia’s claim to sovereignty over East Timor, called for the withdrawal of all Indonesian officials and soldiers and protested against violations of human rights. The statement was signed publicly and individually at a time when East Timorese students in Indonesia were subject to close surveillance, suggesting that the students in Jakarta sensed they could use the political space that Indonesia had created by opening East Timor. They had also learned to protect themselves by appealing publicly to internationally recognised institutions.

On 5 October 1989, coinciding with the expected visit by the Pope to Dili a week after, CNRM issued a peace plan. The first proposal was that talks be held under the auspices of the UN General Secretary, based on the assumption that the people of Timor’s right to an authentic act of self-determination is inalienable, and that Portugal would be allowed to participate as formal administering power. The plan further asked for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping force. The plan was to be carried out in three phases, where the first was to be the withdrawal of Indonesian forces. In the second phase there would be a simultaneous disarmament of the local forces armed by Indonesia and of Falintil. In the third phase the army would be re-organised under Portugal’s responsibility as the decolonising power. A transitional administration, headed by a Portuguese High Commissioner, would also be set up for a period of no more than five years. A date for general elections would be determined during this period. A future independent East Timor was to have no army. The peace plan was ignored by Indonesia, but due to the new openness it became known and printed abroad. The increasing visibility of East Timor among the international media was highlighted when Pope John Paul made a six-hour visit to East Timor in October 1989. Knowing that dozens of foreign reporters and television crews would be present, the East Timorese resistance saw an hitherto unheard of opportunity to reach an international audience for their cause. Orgão Oito, after consultation with guerrilla leader David Alex, decided to use the occasion to stage a peaceful demonstration. Upon landing in Dili, many expected the Pope to kiss the ground, which is his custom when visiting a sovereign nation. This, however, he did not do. John Paul then asked Bishop Belo to join him in the limousine ride from the airport. They stopped at the cathedral, which the Pope blessed. He also kissed the ground at this site, and prayed for a long time, indicating to many of his followers that he indeed saw East Timor as a separate entity from Indonesia.

When the Pope conducted an open air mass at Tasi Tolu, hitherto ill-famed as a place of killings and disappearances in the years following the invasion, a small group of young Timorese demonstrated against the integration. After the Pope’s sermon and final blessing, some young men ran to the front, opened banners and shouted “Long live the Pope!” and “Long live free East Timor!” People in the crowd also began to shout similar slogans. Afraid

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40 *Timor Link*, op. cit., p. 1.
41 Ibid, p. 8.
42 Ibid, p. 10.
43 Taking advantage of the openness during the period of the Pope’s visit, Shirley Shackleton, widow of one of the newsmen killed at Balibo in November 1975, visited Timor with a plan to plant a tree in memory of her husband. Finding herself staying at the same hotel as Benny Murdani, the General who had led the invading forces, she one day confronted him at the breakfast table, asking what had happened at Balibo. “We were not there”, was the general’s answer (*Andrew McMillan, Death in Dili*. Rydalmere, NSW: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992, pp. 99-100).
44 Kohen, op. cit., p. 177.
of the usual violence, most spectators ran to escape, and the protesters disappeared into the crowd. It all happened very quickly, the security had no time to react, or separate the protesters from the rest of the crowd. Their swift reaction was rather to see to it that Pope was taken away from the unexpected scene.\textsuperscript{45} The demonstration and the sympathy with which it was greeted by the crowd made television news programmes in many parts of the world.\textsuperscript{46}

Continuing the Indonesian government’s aim to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the population of East Timor, the Indonesian armed forces on 6 December 1989 officially switched its focus from security operations to territorial administration and development.\textsuperscript{47} The widely feared Brigadier-General Mulyadi was replaced in the East Timor command by Brigadier-General R. S. Warouw. Warouw quickly introduced the new change in policy. The number of checkpoints on roads was sharply reduced, a number of political prisoners were released, and torture became less frequent and less severe.\textsuperscript{48} General Try Sutrisno, the new Commander-in-Chief of ABRI, Indonesia’s armed forces, declared in the same month that the presence of ABRI in East Timor was to serve ‘the noble and holy mission of dynamizing national development, and together with the whole of the people ... to guard, to make a success of and to secure development’.\textsuperscript{49}

Also in the same month, on 11 December 1989, a Timor Gap Zone of Co-operation Treaty was finalised by the Australian minister of Foreign Affairs, Gareth Evans, and his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, in a mid-air ceremony over the formerly disputed maritime area in the Timor Sea. Australia’s position had been that it wanted the Gap to be closed with a straight line, while Indonesia’s position was that the boundary should follow the median line between the two shores (cf. chapter 11). The way out of the deadlock was the creation of a zone of co-operation whose southern boundary was based on Indonesia’s claim to a 200-mile jurisdiction, while the northern boundary was based on Australia’s claim to a boundary set by the continental shelf.\textsuperscript{50} The Zone of Co-operation comprised an area of approximately 60,000 square km which was divided into three separate areas, named Area A, Area B and Area C in the treaty. Areas B and C, which were closest to the shores of Australia and East Timor, were to be controlled by Australia and Indonesia respectively, while Area A, in the middle, was to be jointly controlled by the two countries.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{45} Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., pp. 107-110.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Timor Link} 1990:2
\textsuperscript{48} Feith 1992a, pp. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Timor Link}, op. cit., p. 2.
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The Timor Gap agreement could be seen a success for both the Australian and the Indonesian governments in establishing a greater formality to the integration of East Timor with Indonesia. In Australia, however, it was a highly controversial issue which once more brought East Timor to the forefront of the political agenda.

Following the increasing visibility caused by the opening up of East Timor, the demonstrations during the Pope’s visit and the conclusion of the Timor Gap Treaty, a stream of foreign visitors came to the territory, largely diplomats and journalists who came to see for themselves how integration was proceeding. This soon became a great dilemma for the Indonesian authorities, as the East Timorese youth realised that they could demonstrate against integration with less risk when foreign news media were present. At the same time, communication with resistance forces inside and outside was increased and José Ramos Horta tirelessly promoted the Timorese cause on the international arena.

There were also spontaneous actions taken by individuals outside of the underground movement who were unhappy with Indonesia and wanted to do something to express their anger. Perhaps not a great dilemma, but nonetheless quite irritating, was when a great number of young children began to ask Indonesian soldiers “kapan pulang?” (“when are you going home?”).52

Support from foreign governments, aid, and human rights organizations increased, as did international press coverage.53 All of this was facilitated to an hitherto unimaginable level when in 1990 US human rights activists started an Internet newsgroup (reg.easttimor) which not only made the flow of information immeasurably easier, but also shifted focus towards the US, both when it came to support activities and, as a consequence thereof, the politics of the only remaining super power after the dismantling of the Soviet bloc.54

In 1990 there occurred two major incidents when young East Timorese tried to get their message through to the overseas media during visits to Dili by dignitaries. On 17 January the US Ambassador in Jakarta, Mr John Monjo, was greeted by an anti-integrationist demonstration by a group of about 80 youths in front of Hotel Turismo.55 They entered the

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52 Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., p. 119.
55 This was one occasion when the young activists acted independently of their elder leadership. The students had expressed their wish to stage a demonstration during Monjo’s visit but Xanana, anxious not to jeopardize the upcoming visit of the Portuguese Parliamentary mission, rejected their request. His reply, however, arrived too late for the action to be stopped (Niner 2009, op. cit. p. 125.)
premises, and presented Monjo with gifts and a petition. Monjo did not express any sympathy for the demands of the protestors, but attempted to obtain assurances that the youths would be allowed safe conduct. However, and in spite of the declared new role of ABRI, the demonstration was brutally broken up after Ambassador Monjo’s departure from the hotel, and two young people died.56 Many of the wounded took refuge in the home of Bishop Belo, where they were visited by the governor, Mario Carrascalão, who pleaded with them to return home. The next day they were visited by chief of army intelligence who apologised for the events and promised no further repression if they all went home.

Following the demonstration during the visit by Ambassador Monjo, a number of youth organisations sprang up, most of them also with a larger membership than the previous ones. Among those were FITUN (Always United Front of Timor), UJTL (Union of East Timorese Youth), Sagrada Familia (Sacred family – there will be reason to discuss this group later) and HPPMAI (Anti-Indonesia Youth and Students.)57 With the increasing number of groups, came also the problem of how to co-ordinate activities.

Two weeks after the Monjo incident, General Benny Murdani went to Dili to initiate a ‘get-tough’ policy, in contrast to the ‘soft’ approach of the local army and police, who had even apologised for the violence. Speaking to a gathering of military personnel and civilian officials Murdani said the armed forces would ‘wipe out’ further dissent and crush all challenges to Indonesian control.

‘... If someone makes a move for an independent nation and that movement is strong enough, then the armed forces will destroy it ... There will be no independent East Timor. There is no Timorese nation, there is only the Indonesian nation. Don’t dream of a nation of East Timor. Don’t even talk of a nation of East Timor,’ Murdani said.58

While there was a growing solidarity movement on the outside, and a new generation eager to partake in the resistance inside East Timor, the already mentioned disputes within the Fretilin external front continued. Resenting the time he had to devote to this issue, Xanana Gusmão called an extraordinary CNRM meeting with the Fretilin Central Committee at Aitana in late May, 1990. At this meeting, with all major leaders present, it was decided to form a new body, Comissão Directiva Fretilin, consisting of Lú Olo, Mau Hudo and Ma’Huno, with the power of President of Fretilin, thus avoiding a situation where a leader on the outside would have the power to give orders to those on the inside. A first measure was to expel Abílo Araújo in Lisbon from the position as President of Fretilin, a move which also meant a relative strengthening of Fretilin in Mozambique and a dilution of the party’s leftist ideology.59

Guerilla leader Mau Hodo followed up the national conference of CNRM by proposing, at a meeting in Baucau with Orgão Oito in June 1990, that an executive committee of the clandestine resistance be formed, with the purpose of achieving better co-ordination between the increasing number of groups. In the following month, leaders of clandestine groups from across the territory elected Constantio Pinto as secretary of Comité Executivo da CNRM na Frente Clandestina (the CNRM Executive Committee of the Clandestine Front) with Donaciano Gomes and José Manuel Fernandes as vice-secretaries. From then on, all clandestine groups operated under the supervision of the executive committee, which in its turn was constantly in touch with, and receiving instructions from, the resistance leaders in the mountains.

57 Ibid.
58 TAPOL Bulletin No. 98, April 1990.
59 Niner, 2009, op. cit.
The executive committee soon showed their skills at organizing. On September 4, 1990, there was an outdoor mass in Lecidere, not far from the bishop’s residence, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Dili diocese. Because of its importance, the mass attracted clerics from all over Timor, and a sizeable crowd of some 5,000. The Papal Nuncio in Jakarta, Archbishop Canaline, was a special guest at the occasion. After the mass, a crowd of young demonstrators went up to the altar and shouted out to Archbishop Canaline that they demanded a referendum and chanted anti-Indonesia slogans. In contrast to the atmosphere at the demonstration during the Pope’s visit, there was no feeling of panic this time. There were plenty of police and military present, but because of the large number of church dignitaries present they did not react immediately. The usual chasing and beatings, however, began soon after, and when some students went into hiding in the Motael church, Indonesian troops entered and arrested three of them.60

The number of people participating in the demonstrations was, though constantly increasing, still rather small, but foreign journalists had the impression that they had wide support from urban young people on the whole. They also noted that young Timorese who had no Portuguese schooling were as hostile to Indonesian authority as their elders. Some of the journalists concluded that there was co-operation between the young activists in Dili, the more politically-minded of the priests, and the guerrillas in the mountains.

The opening up of East Timor not only made it easier for diplomats and journalists to visit the province. It also led to an influx of people from Java, Sulawesi and other parts of Indonesia, who came in search of work as petty traders or labourers. These migrants soon outnumbered the people who arrived as part of the government-sponsored transmigrasi schemes.61 A team from the Gadjah Mada University in Java arrived to undertake a Socio-Anthropological study in East Timor in 1990. Four research assistants lived for six weeks in three sub-districts of East Timor. The team, who had also been in East Timor in 1981, could see the material progress within the province. Almost all the provincial and district roads were now well asphalted, and Dili was connected to all district centres by an adequate transportation system. Community health centres had been built in almost all sub-district centres, and almost all sub-district towns had senior high schools. In Dili, two institutes of higher education had been established; the Universitas Timor Timur (1986) and Politeknik Dili (1990). They also found, however, that it had not yet been able to eliminate social, economic and political problems ‘resulting from an integration process which has cost too many human lives’.62 The team found that because of the military’s excessive interference in economic and development matters, local people tended not to have much respect for them.

Problems were also caused by the appointment of newcomers to positions in the administration. After fourteen years of Indonesian rule some government positions were filled by young East Timorese, but they were often disappointed, and stated that they could not do much to solve the problems in East Timor. External factors (Jakarta) were most often blamed

60 Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., pp. 124-126, see also TAPOL Bulletin no. 102, December 1990.
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for this. Furthermore, increasing unemployment amongst the young East Timorese had led to an increasingly obvious ‘indigenous-newcomer’ dichotomy in East Timor.63

The most spectacular result of the opening up of East Timor was that it made possible the first direct contact in fifteen years between the Falintil leadership and the outside world. This happened on 27 September 1990, when Robert Domm, on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, interviewed the guerrilla leader Xanana Gusmão and brought back six cassette tapes.64 Domm’s visit was carefully planned in a close co-operation between the Clandestine Executive Committee in Dili, Renetil in Java and José Ramos Horta in Australia.65 Numerous people were involved in the operation to smuggle Robert Domm to the mountains.

Domm wrote that ‘once out of Dili there were people everywhere, monitoring our movements at every stage, organising and scouting ahead to ensure that we got to the army’s base camp and returned safely’.66 According to Domm, ‘the people in Dili believe there’s hope in the hills ... because their leader is up there. That’s the way they see him, sort of like a beacon. He’s keeping the flame of freedom alive.’67

Robert Domm & Xanana Gusmão. Source: TAPOL.

The successful implementation of Domm’s interview with Xanana clearly indicated a sophisticated underground network supported by the vast majority of the Timorese people. Gusmão himself appeared to be very articulate and aware of world politics. He discussed the problems of guerrilla warfare against a militarily superior enemy, explaining that Falintil couldn’t think about great military successes.

He expressed his disillusionment with the Vatican, talked about the changes taking place in Eastern Europe – where the unravelling of the Soviet Union was in full force at the time - , and compared the international community’s reaction to Kuwait with the lack of reaction to

63 Ibid, p. 64.
65 Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., 126-127.
66 ACFOA, op. cit., p. 9.
67 Ibid, p. 11.
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East Timor.\textsuperscript{68} He saw the Timor Gap agreement as ‘an illegal decision, illegitimate and criminal. In the context that we’re being exterminated by a party to this agreement, Australia ... becomes an accomplice’.\textsuperscript{69} He said that he was ready to discuss any project for a solution without preconditions, and under the auspices of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{70}

After the interview was published in international media, there was a short period of calm while ABRI searched for the location where the meeting between Gusmão and Domm took place. After finding the site, Indonesian military killed the remaining guerrillas and captured some incriminating material, such as documents and photos taken during the interview, compromising some of the network – such as for example Constatino Pinto - in Dili. Gusmão himself was almost captured, being encircled in a mountainous area where for days ABRI’s commander, General Try Sutrisno, specially flown in for the occasion, from a helicopter addressed him through a loudspeaker and called for him to give up.\textsuperscript{71} In the end, however, Xanana Gusmão managed to escape being captured or killed during this largest military offensive in years, while many others didn’t. In a different part of the territory, guerrillas under the command of Konis Santana – future head of the resistance - were ambushed in the foothills of Mount Ramelau, and six out of his group of eight men were killed. Santana himself barely survived the six bullets (!) he caught during the onslaught.\textsuperscript{72}

Robert Domm’s meeting with Xanana Gusmão led to still more exposure of the East Timor question in the Australian media, even if it did not cause much stir on an international level.\textsuperscript{73} It was to be Portugal, which once had evoked massive international criticism for its colonial policies, that would bring East Timor to the international agenda.

From 1976 until 1986 Portuguese policy on East Timor had been very cautious, except for a brief period in the early 1980’s (cf. Chapter 11). José Ramos Horta at one stage even called the Portuguese governments ‘pathetic bystanders’, as successive administrations opted for a relative silencing of the Timor issue, yet without formally abdicating Portugal’s responsibilities as Administering Power of East Timor, as specified in Portugal’s Constitution and the various UN resolutions on East Timor.\textsuperscript{74}

This changed in 1986 after Portugal’s admission into the European Community. As mentioned earlier, the President of Portugal, Mario Soares, spoke out for East Timor in the European Parliament on 9 July 1986. The following day the European Parliament approved a resolution which called upon the government of Indonesia to cease immediately all hostilities.

\textsuperscript{68} The same day that Iraq invaded Kuwait, the Security Council adopted on August 2, 1990, Res. S/660 which condemned the invasion and required the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces. Four days later, the Security Council imposed mandatory sanctions against Iraq (Res. S/661). Eight other resolutions, reinforcing considerably the economic pressure against Iraq were adopted, before the Security Council authorised, by Res. S/678 of 29 November 1990, collective military action against Iraq (Paulette Pierson-Mathi, ‘Reflections on the International Solidarity Movement with the People of East Timor’. In Pedro Pinto Leite (ed.), The East Timor Problem and the Role of Europe. Lisbon: International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET), 1998, p. 248.

\textsuperscript{69} ACFOA, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{71} Niner 2009, op. cit.p. 135.

\textsuperscript{72} Jill Jolliffe, Finding Santana. Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2010, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{73} Even more media attention was afforded East Timor - and Australia’s role - following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. President Saddam Hussein then expressed his surprise at the international community’s reaction, comparing it to the lack of interest shown to Indonesia’s invasion of East Timor. Australian Labor Prime Minister Bob Hake’s remark re the invasion of Kuwait, that “big countries cannot invade little countries and get away with it” was eagerly picked up by activists who pointed out the contradiction between Canberra’s positions on Kuwait and East Timor, respectively. Hussein’s remarks also prompted more than half the members of the US congress to sign a letter to President George Bush pushing for greater action on behalf of the Timorese (Simpson, op. cit., p. 458.)

\textsuperscript{74} A. Barbedo de Magalhães, The East Timor Issue and the Symposia of Oporto University. Oporto University, 1995, p. 9.
against the inhabitants of East Timor, to put an end to the occupation, and to respect the East Timorese people’s right to self-determination.75

The Portuguese position, pushed on by the solidarity movements, had by then evolved from a view where the world community, i.e. UN, and not specifically Portugal, was pitted against Indonesia’s aggression in East Timor. Accordingly, the view was that responsibility to resolve ‘the East Timor question’ rested largely with the United Nations. During the period 1975-1982 Portugal, with few exceptions, was not active in its support of Fretilin. Instead, the support in the world body originated mainly from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, and especially so from Mozambique. This period was then followed by a period between 1982-1986 when Portugal and Indonesia had talks, ‘under the auspices of the UN Secretary General’ (cf. chapter x), where humanitarian and cultural issues were discussed.

As the question of self-determination was not on the agenda, due to Indonesia’s refusal, the Portuguese interest lay in advocating fundamental rights for the East Timorese, to try and safeguard Portuguese culture and the religious identity of the inhabitants in the territory.76 Joining the European Economic Community (EEC, in 1993 renamed European Union, EU) in 1986, meant that Portugal gained access to a new field, where the country, pressed on by the solidarity movements, was in a position to (re)internationalise the question of East Timor. In the eyes of Benedict Anderson, “time started to shift from the Indonesian side to the Timorese side when Portugal joined the European Community.”77

This new Portuguese involvement eventually led Portugal, in February 1991, to institute proceedings against Australia at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague as a reaction to the Timor Gap Treaty.78 Portugal argued that by signing the Timor Gap Treaty with Indonesia, Australia breached the rights of the East Timorese people to self-determination and sovereignty over their natural resources. It alleged that Australia also breached the rights of Portugal, which the United Nations still recognised as the administering power of East Timor.

Australia used two key arguments to defend its case in the ICJ. The first was that the ICJ should dismiss Portugal’s case on procedural grounds, because the ICJ cannot determine Portugal’s claims in the absence of Indonesia, which does not recognise the ICJ. The second argument revolved around the issue of self-determination for East Timor. Australia said the issue of how self-determination should be realised in East Timor was up to the UN, but until such time Australia was within its rights to recognise Indonesian sovereignty and conclude treaties such as the Timor Gap. Foreign Minister Gareth Evans claimed that Australia supports self-determination for East Timor ‘within the framework of Indonesian sovereignty’.79 For the next four years the ICJ kept accused and accuser waiting for a verdict.

Portugal bringing the Timor Gap Treaty to the ICJ was not the only sign of increasing international awareness – now also on state level - in the East Timor conflict. The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) – European Community Joint Assembly meeting in Strasbourg in September 1990 adopted a strong resolution on East Timor.80

In Japan, Prime Minister Kaifu and Portuguese Prime Minister Cavaco da Silva issued in September 1990 a joint statement, in which Kaifu expressed his support for a negotiated

75 Ibid, p. 11.
76 It may be that the continuing existance of Colegio do Externato de São José, the Portuguese speaking secondary school in Dili and important as a meeting place and ‘breeding ground’ for young members of the East Timorese resistance, was to some extent a result of these meetings.
78 Suter, op. cit., p. 294.
solution to the Timor problem. Japan had hitherto quietly supported the annexation without committing itself by extending de jure recognition. In the USA 223 members of the US House of Representatives wrote to the Secretary of State, James Baker, on 19 November 1990, expressing their concern about East Timor.\textsuperscript{81}

The twelve members of the European Community expressed in a joint statement to the UN Commission for Human Rights in February 1991 grave concerns about the human rights situation, and called for a just settlement in accordance with UN principles and the legitimate interest of the East Timorese people.\textsuperscript{82}

Furthermore, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, at a meeting of its Standing Committee in Helsinki on 28 June 1991, unanimously adopted a resolution on East Timor which stated that East Timor had been annexed by Indonesia with total disregard for the rules of international law. The resolution supported the mediation endeavours of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and encouraged parliamentary and other forms of initiatives aimed at enforcing the United Nations’ resolutions. It also called upon the European Community’s member states to insist upon a political solution negotiated within the United Nations, and to urge countries which have economic links with Indonesia to bring pressure to bear on Indonesia to halt all violation of human rights and all appropriation of East Timor’s natural resources and assets. It also called for food and health aid to the East Timorese people and an arms embargo in respect to Indonesia.\textsuperscript{83}

In Australia, an East Timor Talks Campaign was set up in 1991, co-ordinated by Pat Walsh at ACFOA (Australian Council for Foreign Aid) and David Scott at Community Aid Abroad (CAA). Based on Xanana Gusmão’s proposal for talks without preconditions, the campaign called for precisely that, i.e. talks between the East Timorese resistance and Indonesia under the auspices of the United Nations. An International Platform of Jurists on East Timor was set up in Lisbon in November 1991, with the aim of gaining broader recognition of the East Timorese people’s right to self-determination.\textsuperscript{84}

Still, all this amounted to not much more than words, mere words. The increasingly strong wordings were as yet not followed up by any real pressure on Indonesia. As stated in The Times on April 20, 1991, in an article which criticized the hypocrisy of England, the USA and the Vatican re ‘the East Timor question’,

\begin{quote}
Its (Indonesia’s, G.J.) refusal to recognise, or even to discuss, Timorese rights is made possible by one factor, a complete lack of pressure from the outside world. American television networks do not clamour for entry. No heart-rending pictures stir Western emotions to righteous indignation.\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

There would soon be no lack of ‘heart-rending pictures,’ nor of righteous indignation. As from August 6, 1991, there also existed the embryo of a system of global communications in which this indignation could soon be channelled, with a speed and far-reaching effect that would prove to be of vital importance for the dissemination of knowledge about East Timor and, as a consequence thereof, the possibility of influencing political decision-makers. On that day, Tim Berners-Lee, at CERN, The European Organization for Nuclear Research, outside Genéve, Switzerland, launched the result of a project run by him. Few people at the time understood the implications of his creation, the World Wide Web, but in only a few years

\textsuperscript{81} TAPOL Bulletin No. 102, December 1990, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{82} Scott et al. op. cit.
\textsuperscript{83} TAPOL Bulletin No. 106, August 1991, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{84} TAPOL Bulletin No. 108, December 1991, p. 22.
time it would prove to be as revolutionary as the advent of print technology in the 15th century.

**The Dili massacre**

The foreign attention given to East Timor, the demonstrations by East Timorese youth, and, not the least, the highly publicised event of the meeting between Robert Domm and Xanana Gusmão, allowed those officers who saw the opening up as a foolish mistake a stronger hand. Their influence grew, not only in East Timor itself but also in Jakarta. The hard-liners found an occasion to act out their accumulated frustrations on 12 November 1991.

A Portuguese parliamentary mission had for some time been expected to visit East Timor in that month. The plans for the visit had their origins in the UN General Assembly resolution of 1982, in which the UN Secretary-General was instructed to facilitate talks between Indonesia and Portugal ‘to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the East Timor issue.’ Indonesian-Portuguese negotiations under the auspices of the UN had gone on for many years. The meetings had mostly been token ceremonies and not much substance had come out of them. However, one thing which had been under discussion was the possibility that a Portuguese parliamentary group would make a visit to the territory. An invitation to this effect had been issued by Indonesia in 1987, in the hope that a controlled visit would mean an end to the ‘East Timor question’ at the UN once and for all. This had been planned and postponed several times, and people in East Timor had come to doubt whether it would ever take place.

Xanana Gusmão, like many among his generation, identified to some degree with “all things Portuguese” and had great hopes in the planned parliamentary mission, believing that it might eventually lead to his inclusion in the UN talks. Thus, Gusmão made it central to his diplomatic work that the visit should take place, and that its outcome should be advantageous for the resistance, i.e. that Indonesia would be pressured into meaningful negotiations.

In spite of his near capture after the Domm interview, Xanana Gusmão decided to take the risk to move to the lion’s den, i.e. Dili. In doing so, he thought he might fool the Indonesian military, who had always searched for him in the bush, as well as being in a position to better supervise the preparations for the Portuguese delegation. In mid-February 1991, he was smuggled by car from Ainaro to Dili and installed in one of a number of ‘safe houses’, that he rotated between while in the capital. These houses were part of a larger development of communications between the different parts of the resistance, and also reflected the increasing importance of the clandestine resistance in Dili. Where before couriers had brought messages directly from one location to another, this system was discarded in favour of a system of caixas (boxes), so that information (or medicine, clothes, bullets etc.) was now passed through an indirect structure before reaching its final address. Two caixas were established in the eastern area, one in the west and one which covered the area from Dili south to Ainaro and Same. At the top there was to be a caixa geral (a general box) in Dili, to which all clandestine information would be sent, but only after having first passed through a second rung of caixas in Dili. This indirect structure was instigated in order to create protective distance and give time to move the leaders if people lower down were captured. To complement this system, a number of safe houses were established, where leaders such as Xanana could hide in while in Dili.

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88 Ibid.
From Dili, it was easier for Gusmão to move around the territory, or to meet people from abroad than it was from the hideouts in the bush. At all times he worked closely with Constantino Pinto and others from the clandestine resistance, who were organizing civilians to greet the Portuguese delegations with ceremonies in all parts of the territory. Equipped with an Indonesian identity card with a fake name and taxied around by trustworthy people, Gusmão worked tirelessly to prepare for the arrival of the Portuguese parliamentarians. This involved extensive travelling across the territory, from Ermera in the west to Los Palos in the east between May and July 1991, including a meeting with Bishop Belo in Ossu. This time, the atmosphere between the two was decidedly less strained than it had been at their previous meeting in April 1986, when Xanana had been more than a little suspicious of the prelate. In the intervening years, Belo had proven his worth by courageously standing up against the occupying forces. Back in Dili in July, he met with Portuguese journalist Mário Robalo. Somebody carelessly had photos of the meeting developed at a local photo-shop and the pictures fell into Indonesian hands, forcing Xanana to go into hiding for one month. Finally they concluded that he had escaped to the bush, and called off the search in Dili.

By August Gusmão had managed to escape to Same, where he – through Bishop Belo – was reached by an offer of a meeting from General Warouw. In his reply, Gusmão accused Warouw of “being duplicitous in his invite and threatening and persecuting people prior to the visit of the Portuguese”, and wrote that in such circumstances a sincere dialogue was impossible. In July-August 1991, however, large numbers of politically active East Timorese came to believe that the mission would eventually arrive, and they began to make preparations for the visit. In secret meetings banners were prepared and demonstrations planned.

On 28 October 1991 the Bupati (senior local administrator) of Dili called three schools together to inform them that anyone who spoke to the Portuguese or approached them ‘would end up in Tasi Tolu’. Tasi Tolu is one of the killing grounds used in the early eighties by the Indonesian military to dispose of their Timorese victims. The same day a Portuguese official announced that the parliamentary group would not be going to East Timor after all. Portugal was not prepared, he said, to accept an Indonesian veto on a particular Australian journalist (Jill Jolliffe, at the time based in Portugal) who had been chosen to accompany the mission. Many Timorese were bitterly disappointed, and suspected that Portugal had only waited for an excuse to cancel the trip. If they had really been serious about going to Timor, why not then just swallow their pride and exclude the journalist from the journey? When the Portuguese cancelled their trip the Indonesians immediately started house-to-house searches and arrests. Further adding to the tension on 28 October, plainclothes police stoned the Motael church and killed a student, Sebastião Gomes Rangel, who had taken refuge there.

It was in this political climate that a demonstration was planned, to coincide with a visit to Dili in the second week of November 1991 by the UN special rapporteur on torture, Peter Kooijmans.

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90 Constantino Pinto had been arrested in January 1991, but was released in February, now acting as a double agent; i.e. continuing his work secretly within the resistance while at the same time reporting each day to SGI (Satuan Gabungan Intellijen; Kopassus intelligence unit) and disseminating information that was either harmless or already well known to them. Obviously, Xanana Gusmão never questioned Pinto’s loyalty, while others did.


93 Ibid, p. 4.


95 Feith, op. cit., p. 5.

96 Niner 2009, op. cit., p. 139.

97 Great Britain, op. cit.
PART 3. OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

On November 12, a great number of people – variously given as anything from 2,000 to 6,000 - mainly between fourteen and twenty-five years of age, marched from an early morning mass at Dili’s Motael church, in commemoration of Sebastião Gomes Rangel, to the Santa Cruz cemetery.98 Whatever the correct number, the amazing thing is that the demonstration was organized in only twenty-four hours. On the evening of November 10, Constântio Pinto contacted a number of local resistance leaders and issued them the relevant instructions, which were then issued to the participants on the following day.99

The procession began outside the church. Sebastião’s family were there, with flowers to put on his grave.

Approaching the centre of the town, the procession grew bigger, as it was joined by people who came out from offices, schools, and houses along the way. The intensity of the chanting and excitement increased as more and more demonstrators raised their voices in protest. When they passed by the soldiers, some of them shouted ‘Long Live East Timor’ and made ‘V’ for victory signs. The banners carried appeals to Portugal, the UN, and the USA; others showed their support for the Pope, the Catholic Church, Falintil, Xanana, Fretilin and the UDT.100 Occasionally, the young people would become excited and start running, but the older ones brought them back under control, by shouting ‘discipline, discipline’. Whenever the crowd passed a military or police post they waved their flags more vigorously and shouted louder. The atmosphere was getting more and more intense.101

The defiance of the young crowd reflected their knowledge that there was a sizeable group of sympathetic foreigners in town, including a group of journalists. One of them, the Dutch reporter Saskia Kouwenberg, was at the mass at the Motael church, and was a witness to the demonstration from the beginning. This is her (abridged) testimony:

I attended the Catholic Mass held at the Motael Church 6 am in commemoration of Sebastião Gomes Rangel’s death. Due to the large crowd the mass was moved outdoors. All was quiet. With the Mass over, people moved onto the street. Concealed banners were unfurled and hidden T-shirts with slogans were displayed. The crowd became vocal with shouts of ‘Viva Sebastião, Viva Timor Leste, Independence, Viva Xanana.’

The march was led by two girls carrying baskets of flowers. The demonstration went past the Governor’s house and turned right (towards the Santa Cruz cemetery, G. J.). By the time I got to the cemetery entrance, demonstrators were climbing the wall for photographers to take pictures of the banners and the hands held high in a V sign. A ceremony of prayers and laying of flowers was announced through a megaphone. To the south of the demonstration the military were forming. Suddenly a few shots rang out continued by an explosive volley of automatic rifle fire that persisted for two to three minutes. They were firing directly into the crowd. I ran like everybody else.102

During the melee, two American Journalists, Amy Goodman of WBAI/Pacifica Radio and Allan Nairn from the New Yorker magazine were beaten, with Nairn suffering a fractured skull after being hit with rifle butts. British photographer Steve Cox took photos of the dead and wounded; besides being beaten up, he was threatened by soldiers who put a gun to his

98 Feith, op. cit., p. 5.
99 Pinto, op. cit., p. 34.
100 UDT had made a slow comeback to East Timorese politics since the Convergence in 1986. In late April 1990 ten representatives of Fretilin and UDT respectively had med to discuss problems in the diplomatic front of the resistance, at the second Jornada at the Porto University (Magalhães & Liong, op. cit., p. 29.)
102 Great Britain, op. cit., pp. 26-29. A horrified Xanana Gusmão, hiding in a ‘safe house’ nearby could hear the gunfire, as did Peter Kooijmans, the UN Special rapporteur.
head and a bayonet to his throat. I let Max Stahl, working for Yorkshire television, who was filming inside the Santa Cruz cemetery continue the story:

I was in the cemetery when the shooting started outside its walls. The leaders of the demonstration had walked into the cemetery and made an announcement over loudspeakers that prayers were to begin for their dead companion, Sebastião. I scrambled for cover among the tombstones and dust and screams filled the air. The scene at the cemetery gate was frozen into my mind. A young man, badly wounded but still not dead, lay across the entrance. Others had tripped and fallen in the dirt. A solid wedge of people were stuck in the entrance, pressed from behind by hundreds of others desperate to escape the bullets. Then the wedge broke, and the people poured screaming through the gap, trampling over the bodies, the wounded and the whole alike. The soldiers kept up a sustained volley of fire, perhaps two minutes long - thousands of rounds poured into the crowd. Then there was a pause, with sporadic fire, and then another volley shorter than the first, and then more sporadic shots as the soldiers moved, in ordered ranks, to surround the cemetery. I saw soldiers commanded by officers in civilian dress, moving methodically between the tombstones, searching out wounded and fugitive demonstrators. As they got to them they kicked them with rifle butts and batons. I was filming all this. Several young men gathered around me, thinking that I, as a foreigner, might offer some protection. But I could not help them. All I could do was bury my videotape in a grave in anticipation of my own arrest.103

The horrors did not end when the shooting stopped at the cemetery. A number of wounded young people were later on the same day killed in the Dili hospital. João Antonio Dias and Aviano Antonio Faria were eyewitnesses to this second massacre. Both managed to flee from East Timor and both have witnessed about the event. João Antonio Dias said in Malmö, Sweden, on 25 April 1995:

The hospital was surrounded by large numbers of military, military police and intelligence, preventing anyone from leaving. Between 50 and 200 wounded people were taken there. I saw with my own eyes how Indonesian security forces used rocks to crush the skulls of wounded people. I saw army trucks crushing to death many wounded students lying on the ground outside the hospital. They then asked the doctors for some pills. The doctors brought a jar of pills which were then given to some of the wounded. The victims breathing became weaker and they died quickly. We still don’t know where the bodies were taken.104

Hundreds of young people ran to Bishop Belo’s house for protection, and police and military surrounded the residence. Finally there were 315 young people hiding in the bishop’s house and garden. The Bishop and his assistants later drove the youngsters home, while the Intel men were taking notes of who they were. The following day, Belo was allowed to enter the hospital, where he noted with horror that many of the wounded had been among those he had protected the day before, some of them now so badly beaten that they were beyond recognition.105 As horrible as the massacre at Santa Cruz was, it became a powerful symbol of resistance, and the young people who organised the demonstration and fell victim to the brutality of the occupying power, became known as Loriku aswa’in, the Lorikeet warriors, a name that henceforth came to represent the young resistance in general.106

103 Ibid, p. 22.
104 Interview with the author.
105 Kohen, op. cit., pp. 198-199.
13. The aftermath of the Santa Cruz massacre

The Santa Cruz massacre – unlike the many preceding massacres – did not go unnoticed in the outside world. Max Stahl did manage to hide his film of the massacre in the cemetery. It was later smuggled out by Saskia Kouwenberg, and within a week the horrible scenes from Santa Cruz were shown on television throughout the world. The video footage was also included in the Yorkshire Television documentary In Cold Blood: The Massacre of East Timor and the John Pilger produced film Death of a Nation: The East Timor Conspiracy. Combined with the testimonies of Nairn and Goodman and others, it caused an outrage around the world. This was not lessened by the fact that there had been a foreigner killed, the New Zealander Kamal Bamadhaj, born of Malaysian parents. Reactions were especially strong in Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and Holland, but there were also condemning statements from a foreign ministers meeting of the European Community and from members of the Japanese Parliament and the US Congress. The governments of Denmark, the Netherlands and Canada, not satisfied with mere statements, announced that they would be suspending new aid commitments to Indonesia.1 In Jakarta itself, on 19 November 1991, a number of East Timorese students organised a demonstration against the Dili massacre, in front of the UN representative’s office. The seventy-two participants were all arrested, but nobody was killed.

The Indonesian army at first claimed that nineteen people had been killed, and ABRI Commander Try Sutrisno said: ‘It is necessary to fire on those who do not follow the official line. ABRI is determined to eliminate whoever disturbs stability.’2 This statement was not backed up by Suharto, who instead appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by Supreme Court Judge Djaelani. The resulting report concluded that about fifty people had been killed on 12 November, with over ninety-one wounded and about ninety missing.3

After the release of the Djaelani report President Suharto sacked the two principal commanders in charge of Timor policy, Brigadier-General Warouw and Major-General Sintong Panjaitan. Suharto expressed condolences to the families of those who had died, and he instructed Try Sutrisno to find the ninety missing people. He also established a Military Honour Council to devise ways of punishing armed forces members who had been involved in the massacre. Representatives of the US, Japanese, Australian and other previously critical governments described these as credible responses, and the countries which had suspended aid reversed this decision.4 Massacre or no massacre, business went on as usual re the quest for Timor Gap when, in December 1991, Japan Indonesia Oil together with the Australian company BHP won the international bidding on lot 91-012 and Nippon Oil, together with Royal Dutch Shell (the Netherlands) and Chevron (USA) won bidding on lot 91-02.5

Suharto then humiliated the Netherlands for the way its Foreign Aid Minister Jan Pronk had argued for a linkage between human rights and aid to Indonesia, when he announced in

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3 Feith 1992b, op. cit.
4 Ibid.
March 1992 that Indonesia would accept no further Dutch aid, and also demanded that the Dutch-chaired aid consortium IGGI (Inter Governmental Group on Indonesia) be replaced by a new, World Bank-chaired, Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI).

This was clearly a high-risk game, since so much of Suharto’s power was based on his ability to deliver development, and half of the development budget was composed of foreign aid. It was, however, a game that succeeded. After the Djaelani report calmed the worst criticism, mutual interests again prevailed, and IGGI was indeed replaced by CGI to the chagrin of the Dutch.

Jakarta appointed a new commander of the East Timor military district in place of the sacked Warouw. This move was not designed to create a more relaxed atmosphere in Dili. Brigadier-General Theo Syafei, upon assuming his duties declared instead that he would be tougher than his predecessor. He said: ‘If something similar to the 12 November event was to happen under my leadership, the number of victims would be higher.’ The importance which the New Order attached to ideological control can be judged by the violence of its reaction to any challenge, however peaceful. Human rights violations often occurred in response to essentially peaceful protests. The Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor was officially justified on the grounds that demonstrators were expressing anti-government sentiments. In July 1992 the Regional Military Commander, Major General Mantiri, told the press: ‘We don’t regret anything. What happened was quite proper…They were opposing us, demonstrating, even yelling things against the government. To me that is identical with rebellion, so that is why we took firm action…I don’t think there’s anything strange in that.’

The legal aftermath to the massacres on 12 November 1991 was that ten low ranking armed forces members were court-martialed and given sentences of between eight and twenty months for violating military discipline. Eight Timorese were tried for organising the 12 November demonstration, and five were tried for organising the Jakarta demonstration a week later. Three of the organisers were given sentences of between nine and fifteen years, and one, Gregório Saldanha, was sentenced to life imprisonment. Constâncio Pinto was smuggled out of Timor in May 1992, while most of the leadership of Renetil (including the Secretary, Fernando de Araújo, a.k.a. Lasama) and the executive of the clandestine front were among those arrested. This was a heavy blow to the resistance, and many organisations ceased to exist for all practical reasons. There was to be no demonstration in Dili with more than ten participants until 1994. Many of the persecuted students wanted to join the guerrillas after the massacre, but partly because of a lack of weapons, the Falintil leadership instead asked them to continue with the clandestine political work in the towns. Constântio Pinto again went underground, and in co-operation with Xanana Gusmão and teams of Timorese students, teachers, nuns, paramedics, hospital staff and workers at the morgues, compiled a list of the victims of the Santa Cruz massacre, a list that named 271 killed and 600 unaccounted for. The list was sent to the solidarity group Paz é Possivel in Portugal in February 1992, and a copy was sent to Amnesty International. The ‘unaccounted for’ was subsequently specified as 278 wounded, 103 hospitalized and 270 disappeared.

Only weeks after the massacre, there were rumours of a peace boat, the Lusitania Expresso, that was to sail from Portugal to East Timor to lay flowers on the graves of those
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killed at Santa Cruz. The parents of the killed youngsters initiated plans to organize protests during the upcoming visit, but the CNRM executive committee soon instructed Constântio Pinto and the underground resistance to take over the planning.

The Indonesian military also stepped up its visible presence, and increased the number of civilian intelligence agents. In this increasingly tense situation, Constântio Pinto was smuggled out of Timor in May 1992, and via Macau arrived in Lisbon in November. He immediately teamed up with José Ramos Horta, and began working as traveling representative of the CNRM. As such, he visited a number of countries, including a two month ETAN-organised speaking tour of the US and Canada in April-May 1993.

Jakarta made the final clean-up operation after the Dili massacre when it appointed José Abílio Osório Soares as new Governor of East Timor in September 1992. Soares’ brother, Apodeti General Secretary José Osório Soares, had been killed by Fretelin in 1975, shortly after the invasion, and when José took over from Mario Carrascalao as Governor this clearly indicated a turn to the right in East Timorese politics. The shift of both military commander and Governor left Bishop Belo, in the words of Herb Feith ‘a lonely survivor of the forces of reform and reconciliation.’

An outburst of widespread international grassroots solidarity

I related in Chapter 11 how solidarity work with East Timor developed from a first stage, where it was mainly a concern for only a handful of people in Australia, Portugal and a few other countries to an increasingly international – but still numerically very limited – network. From being a concern mainly of those on the left, the “East Timor question” had also during the 1980’s become a matter for Church organisations and those with a broader interest in human rights. A lot had to do with the disgust that was borne out of the realisation that one’s own government directly or indirectly supported the atrocities and oppression that the Timorese people suffered under. The growth of the solidarity movement in the 1980s coincided with a political shift within the Timorese resistance, which consisted of the emergence of Xanana Gusmão as a leader, the creation of CRRN and the simultaneous (though not un-contested) down-playing of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric.

The second stage was a direct result of the televised massacre in November 1991. This time solidarity movements sprang up also in the US, in Indonesia itself, and eventually in a large number of countries, many of them with little or no direct state-level interest in the matter. The second stage was characterised by three distinct features: a) a strong emphasis on the connection between the Timorese struggle for independence and the domestic struggle of Indonesians for democracy, b) the worldwide enlargement of the movement, and c) the dynamics of co-ordination between the solidarity groups. The latter was greatly facilitated by the growing use of e-mail and the Internet.

12 One indirect consequence of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor has been the development of an "Intel culture", in which some East Timorese has aimed to resolve conflicts among themselves by spying and reporting on their compatriots to the Indonesian authorities (George Aditjondro, East Timor. An Indonesian Intellectual Speaks Out. Melbourne: ACFOA, Development Dossier No. 33, 1994, p. 12.)
14 Feith, op. cit., p. 8.
16 Ibid. From this period comes also Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas’ famous statement – in an interview in Tempo, 28 March 1992 - that East Timor is the ‘pebble in the shoe’ of his country’s foreign relations.
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In the US, wheels were set in motion on December 10, 1991, when a handful of activists demonstrated in front of the Indonesian Mission to the United States in the wake of the Dili massacre. The activists were outraged by their government’s complicity in the grisly affair. These activists then formed the East Timor Action Network (ETAN), with the immediate aim to stop US military assistance and training to Indonesia and a long-term aim to work for an act of self-determination in East Timor. Little did any of those present on that December day imagine that what they had initiated would by the mid-decade have expanded into a movement with a membership of more than 10,000, among them a number of committed activists.

As grassroots support groups popped up in a steadily growing number of countries; they together formed – also in 1991 - the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) to co-ordinate their collective efforts. One such group is illustrative of the now global concern aroused by ‘the East Timor question.’ The International Platform of Jurists for East Timor, founded in Lisbon in November 1991, had an executive council with members from the Netherlands, Portugal, the United States, Australia, India, Mozambique and Brazil. One important member of IFET was BCET (The British Coalition for East Timor) founded in 1992 as a UK network of already existing non-governmental organisations working for human rights and self-determination in East Timor.

It must be strongly emphasized that the collapse of the Eastern European Communist regimes, beginning in Poland in August 1989, continuing with the opening of the Berlin Wall in November, the installing of Vaclav Havel as President of Czechoslovakia in December, the independence of the Baltic States in 1990 and finally the demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991, had an immeasurable impact on this outburst of civil society’s (and state-influencing) activities. As far as global politics went, the threat of world-communism turned into a bad joke in a very short time, thereby nullifying both the perceived need for a continued ‘containment policy’ on the side of USA and its allies and also the need to support increasingly embarrassing “bulwarks against communism” such as Suharto. In East Timor itself, young people watched events in Eastern Europe unfold in front of their eyes on television and undoubtedly thought that if it can happen there, why not here? The general “freedom euphoria” also influenced NGOs all over the world; after so many years of a more or less deadlocked situation where realpolitik was the name of the game, everything now seemed possible.

Indonesian solidarity – the democracy movement.

The Santa Cruz massacre, exposed even by domestic Indonesian media, during a period of keterbukaan (openness) beginning in June 1989, opened the eyes of many Indonesians, not only the pro-democracy activists, to what was really happening in East Timor. Some pro-democracy activists now began to see the fight for democracy in Indonesia and the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination as parts of the same struggle. At the same time, Timorese independence fighters, realising that their enemy was the Indonesian government, not the Indonesian people, began to seek support from opposition circles in Indonesia.

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid, p. 461.
20 De Sousa Santos & Nunes, op. cit.
In the late 1980s and early 1990s a number of new NGOs focusing specifically on democracy and human rights were established in Indonesia. One of them was Infight, the Indonesian Front for the Defense of Human Rights. After the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili in November 1991, Infight sent a delegation to the parliament to protest, and also helped organize student demonstrations in Jakarta.22

As Harold Crouch points out, there had hitherto been very little in the way of awareness of East Timor among the educated middle class in Indonesia. The East Timorese made up less than one half per cent of Indonesia’s population, and if Timor Timur was perceived as a problem at all, it was just one problem among several others, many of them more pressing. It was only after Santa Cruz that this view changed.23 Indonesian activists began to form solidarity groups to protest the massacre and to defend the East Timorese in Indonesia and East Timor who had been detained for organizing demonstrations in the weeks thereafter.24 These groups linked up with existing NGOs, like LBH (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum, or Legal Aid Institute) and ELSAM (Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat, or Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy), under an umbrella organization called the Joint Committee for East Timor. Eventually the Joint Committee was disbanded, but the cause continued to be supported by a wide range of independent groups, the most prominent of which were Fortilos (Forum Solidaritas Untuk Rakyat Timor Timur, or Solidarity Forum for the People of East Timor) and Solidamor (Solidaritas untuk Penyelesaian Damai Timor Leste, or Solidarity for Peace in East Timor). The work of these organizations was critical in increasing the political costs of the occupation for Indonesian authorities, and contributed to what one scholar has called “Timor fatigue” among elements of the political elite.25 The Indonesian pro-democracy groups supported East Timor activists living in Indonesian cities in various ways. They also investigated, and informed news media and international NGOs about, human rights abuses, in the process challenging the very fibres of the authoritarian system that hindered democracy in Indonesia.26

Still more literature available

The increasing number of people with an interest in East Timor now also had a quickly increasing wealth of information in which to quench their thirst for knowledge about the hitherto obscure affair. John Taylor’s Indonesia’s Forgotten War. The Hidden History of East Timor (1991) is an excellent (in my view) summary of the modern history of East Timor and contains a very useful chronology of events relating to the East Timor conflict. The scope of Taylor’s book is similar to that of Dunn’s Timor. A people Betrayed (1983), but Taylor continues the story up until April 1990. Two books of a different nature are Michele Turner’s book Telling East Timor: Personal Testimonies 1942-1992 (1992), which is a collection of very moving narratives by East Timorese persons, and Timothy Mo’s remarkable The Redundancy of Courage (1992) which presents the period from 1970 onwards as a roman à clef as told by a young (and gay) Chinese hotel-keeper. A great wealth of material in the

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24 One week after the massacre, Renetil held its first ever demonstration in Jakarta, outside the office of the United Nations. They were well prepared, as a demonstration had originally been planned to coincide with the – eventually cancelled – visit by the Portuguese parliamentary delegation. All seventy-two demonstrators were arrested (Nicholson, op. cit., p. 23.)
26 Simpson, op. cit., p. 461.
shape of pamphlets and periodicals had by now come forth from various organisations and individuals who supported the East Timor struggle. A large part of the latter deal with ‘The Shaming of the West’, just to mention one title.

Patricia Thatcher’s *The Timor-Born in Exile in Australia* (1992), is the odd one out among the writings of this period, as it deals mainly with the East Timorese community in Australia, besides containing a wealth of other information. Other works that I consider to be worth special mention are Yvette Lawson’s *East Timor: Roots Continue to Grow* (1989) and João Boavida’s *The Fusion of Religion and Nationalism in East Timor: A Culture in the Making* (1993).

**The Lusitania Expresso**

In Portugal, the filmed Santa Cruz massacre, and the sight of dying Timorese saying their final prayers in Portuguese caused an unprecedented outrage. Portuguese activists reacted quickly, raising funds to charter an old Portuguese car ferry *Lusitania Expresso*, with the aim to sail to East Timor and place flowers at the Santa Cruz cemetery. The leading figure amongst the organizers of the mission was Rui Marques, a 29-year-old medicine graduate-turned-broadcaster on the Catholic Church’s Radio *Renascensa*, who had founded the student newspaper *Fórum Estudante*. It was through *Fórum Estudante* that the project was advertised and organized. 46 students from 21 countries signed up, as did former Portuguese President Antonio Ramalho Eanes and long-time East Timor activist Professor António Barbado de Magalhães, 9 organizers, a medical team of four, 18 Portuguese students and 26 Portuguese journalists.27

The *Lusitania Expresso* left Lisbon on 22 January 1992 with a crew of six and docked in Darwin on March 4, while the participants of the mission, an entourage numbering 86, were flown to Darwin at a cost of half a million dollars paid for by anonymous donors. Local East Timorese, mainly refugees from 1975 gave them a highly emotional welcome.28 Indonesia responded to the plans with a statement from its Department of Foreign Affairs on 25 February 1992. The statement asserted that:

1) The news report of the voyage had created the impression that the voyage was to be ‘provocative in nature, that it is not at all humanitarian but politically motivated and designed to instigate confrontation, aggravate tension, induce divisiveness and incite disturbances in East Timor’,

2) That the Indonesian government had not received any request from either the operators of the vessel or its passengers for authorization to sail into Indonesian waters or to land at Dili, or for entry permits such as visas.29

3) Relying on these grounds, the Indonesian government declared that the territorial waters of Indonesia were closed to the Lusitania Expresso with the added warning that it would ‘in accordance with its sovereign rights and for the sake of public order … enforce the applicable national and international laws if the group persists in this voyage’.30

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30 Ibid.
The mission’s organizers and the Portuguese journalists moved into Darwin’s Mirambeena Resort and set up the HQ, with a press center which was open 18 hours a day. Spokesman Antonio Ravara told a news conference on March 5 that the mission would conform with marine regulations and would not endanger the safety of the passengers on the ship. “If we are prevented from landing we will have achieved our aim if our efforts are publicised throughout the world” he said. He also said that “this mission is a very complicated one to organise. It cost $1.5 million. All these funds were given by donations … by anonymous people, students, student organisations, mayors, city councils, and businessmen in Portugal, Australia, South Africa, Macau and other communities all over the world.”

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans disassociated Australia from the voyage, saying: “We don’t believe this particular ship visit will improve the situation in east Timor in any way, and we don’t regard it as contributing in any useful way to a process of longer-term reconciliation in the province.” “Pontius Pilate, thy name is Gareth Evans” was the response from Shirley Shackleton, widow of Greg Shackleton, one of the five journalists killed at Balibo in 1975, who joined the entourage in Darwin.

The Lusitania Expresso left Darwin for Dili on 9 March 1992, now with an added number of 27 Australian journalists, still more young activists, now numbering over a hundred. The ship entered Indonesia’s territorial sea on 11 March. At that time it was accompanied by two Indonesian Navy frigates, the KRI Yos Sudarso and KRI Ki Hadjardewantara. A radio request was made by the Commander of KRI Yos Sudarso that the Lusitania Expresso leave the Indonesian territorial sea. Helicopters from the frigates hovered overhead, one of them a Bell Sioux, one of twelve such provided to Indonesia by Australia in March 1978. “It’s comforting to know our gifts have lasted so long”. Andrew McMillan dryly observed. The Lusitania Expresso turned about and began to sail away from East Timor, now within sight. The departure from Indonesian waters were delayed for nearly two hours, however, while the Lusitania Expresso completed minor repair works. On the rear deck, a Portuguese priest conducted a memorial service for those killed at Santa Cruz. The service was translated into English. Representatives of each of the twenty-one countries aboard then cast wreaths into the sea and said a few words in their own languages. After the repairs were completed the vessel resumed its course and returned directly to Darwin.

On 22 March, Melbourne’s The Age claimed that the main financial backer of the Lusitania Expresso was the Portuguese state-owned oil company GALP, through its subsidiary Petroléos de Portugal, in spite of the Portuguese Government consistently claiming that it gave only moral support to the student protest mission but no official or financial backing. Portugal further announced through its permanent mission at the UN that an action of this nature “is not consistent with the diplomatic and political steps the Portuguese government is taking in order to defend the legitimate rights of the East Timor people.” The Sunday Age cited a spokesperson for GALP as the source of the information. GALP’s donation was the more significant because the Portuguese Government was at the time appealing in the International Court of Justice an agreement between Australia and Indonesia to share potential oil rights in the Timor Sea (cf. Ch. 12). The Age also confirmed that the mission received substantial parts of its funding from six Portuguese banks and Marconi, a major electronics
company.\textsuperscript{37} The idealistic and supposedly strictly humanitarian nature of the endeavour suddenly seemed somewhat tainted by these links to politics and big business interests. Members of the mission had already previously raised questions about the funding before the boat left shore, but were assured by Rui Marques that the effort was non-political and paid for with a fund-raising drive by the \textit{Fórum Estudante}. The exposure that it had been mainly backed by GALP and other big business sources caused some of the participants to wonder whether the \textit{Lusitania Expresso} had been used as a pawn in the game of oil companies. It also resulted in a welcome chance for Indonesia to accuse Portugal of hypocrisy and of using provocations. This was done in an announcement by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the UN in New York on Thursday, March 19. “Since the purpose of the voyage was provocative in nature, far from being a voyage of peace and respect for human rights, it was politically motivated,” said the statement. The Indonesian release also said the Portuguese government had made desperate attempts to disassociate itself from the voyage, arguing that those attempts seriously lacked credibility. In doing so, the Indonesian side quoted from the above-mentioned issue of \textit{The Age}, and a similar report in the \textit{Washington Times}.\textsuperscript{38} Thus, the adventure of the Lusitania Expresso left at least some of the participants with a somewhat sour and bitter after-taste. Still, as Constântio Pinto points out, the Lusitania Expresso once again brought East Timor to the world’s attention, adding that “the people on the Lusitania Expresso were braver than the Portuguese parliamentary delegation.” \textsuperscript{39}

Another interesting aspect, pointed out by Benedict Anderson, was the reaction to the \textit{Lusitania Expresso} endeavour by ABRI commander Theo Syafei who, in an interview in the Jakarta magazine \textit{Editor} said that the ship itself was not dangerous, but if it anchored in Dili harbour, ‘it could be that I would be facing 120,000 inhabitants … I could not guarantee that there would not be an explosion of the masses’. The admission that in all likelihood the majority of the East Timorese opposed Indonesian rule was a far cry from the hitherto expressed official Indonesian position of “a few dozen diehard opponents in the mountainous interior.”\textsuperscript{40}

A CNRM Peace plan

So, now the activities towards self-determination were clearly three-pronged. The diplomatic front, led by an indefatigable José Ramos Horta, and with fast growing support by outside activists (Timorese and non-Timorese) and politicians became equally important as the underground movement in East Timor and in Indonesia itself. Following the shock of the Santa Cruz massacre, and the imprisonment or deaths of many of its leaders, the clandestine movement soon re-established itself across the territory.\textsuperscript{41} At the same time, the presence of Falintil in the East Timorese mountains, though not a real threat to the Indonesian military\textsuperscript{42}, meant that the ‘East Timor question’ could only be resolved satisfactorily by negotiations.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{38} ETAN, op. cit. 
\textsuperscript{39} Pinto & Jardine, op. cit., p. 199. 
\textsuperscript{40} Benedict Anderson, ‘Imagining East Timor,’ \textit{Arena Magazine}, No 17, January 1994. 
\textsuperscript{42} It has been estimated that at the end of 1992, Falintil numbered only about 150 (Rees, op. cit.) 
As an important step towards negotiations, a CNRM peace plan was launched by José Ramos Horta at the European Parliament in Brussels in April 1992; soon after he also presented it at the UN. The plan was based on the one presented in 1989 (itself an elaboration on proposals put forth during the cease-fire in 1983) and was to be implemented in three phases. In a first phase, all parties to the conflict - the resistance, Portugal (as still official administering power) and Indonesia - would implement wide ranging ‘confidence building measures’ under the auspices of the United Nations. Following this, there would be a phase of political autonomy, lasting between five to ten years, with a democratically elected People’s Assembly. Finally, there was to be a referendum to determine the political status of the territory.44

In order to facilitate communication with the now very active Timorese diaspora and increasing number of foreign supporters overseas, Xanana Gusmão spent more and more time in “safe houses” in Dili, or in the nearby village of Balibar, from where his messages were forwarded by taxi-drivers and others involved in the clandestine estafeta.45 There existed an ongoing cat and mouse game with the Indonesian intelligence apparatus, but Gusmão must have weighed the gains of having access to Dili – and thereby also to the world at large - against the risks involved. Seen in hindsight, it was only a matter of time before his luck would run out.

Xanana Gusmão is captured

On 20 November 1992 Xanana Gusmão was captured by the Indonesian military at a hideout in Dili. The day after he was flown to Denpasar, Bali, where he for more than two weeks was continually interrogated and deprived of sleep. He was during this period filmed together with Abílio Osorio Soares, Governor of East Timor. In the film, Gusmão stated that he was an Indonesian citizen, that he accepted that East Timor was a part of Indonesia, and called for Falintil to lay down arms. Soon after, he was video-taped together with Xavier do Amaral, where the two former and present leaders of the resistance called for an end to resistance of Indonesian rule. The footage was shown on numerous occasions on television in Indonesia and East Timor.46 Gusmão later said that acceding to these requests was a way to ensure that he would not be disposed of before standing trial. Xavier do Amaral also advised him to cooperate with his captors or else risk a possible fatal torture.47

His trial – in a civilian court in Dili – lasted from 1 February to 21 May 1993. A number of foreign journalists were allowed to attend the trial. US, British and Japanese diplomats also attended parts of the trial, as did Amos Wako, Kenya’s Attorney General, who had visited East Timor in 1992 as a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to investigate the Dili massacre. The various charges against Gusmão included that he was responsible for a number of activities of the armed resistance movement from 1981 to November 1992; that he had established a communication network which extended not only to other Indonesian provinces but also internationally; that he had been interviewed by foreign journalists; and that he had commanded one Constâncio Pinto to organise the demonstration on 12 November 1991. He was also accused of possession of several firearms with ammunition.

Xanana succeeded in getting permission to deliver a defence speech on 17 May, but he got no further than page three of his twenty-eight page text when the judge stopped him on the

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grounds that his defence was irrelevant. The text was later smuggled out and released overseas. One small excerpt of the abruptly interrupted defence speech reads:

In the eyes of international law I am still, like all Timorese, a Portuguese citizen and, in my own eyes, a citizen of East Timor. It is in these terms I reject the competence of any Indonesian court to try me, and even less a court set up by force of arms in my own country, East Timor.

Three days later Xanana Gusmão was sentenced to life imprisonment. This was later reduced by President Suharto to twenty years. He was transferred at first to a jail in Semarang in central Java, and later to the Cipinang jail in Jakarta. Jakarta thereby got rid of a symbolic Robin Hood figure, but at the same time ended up with a symbolic ‘Mandela’ on their hands. At Cipinang prison, he spent his time studying English and law, writing poetry and painting watercolors. Also, and more importantly, he continued to mastermind the resistance from his cell together with Ramos Horta, and the Australian Kirsty Sword acting as his go-between.

While working at Oxford University’s Refugee Studies Program, Kirsty Sword had been contacted by Yorkshire Television’s Max Stahl to work as a researcher during his work with the documentary that would eventually become the chilling *In Cold Blood*, and as such had spent five weeks in Dili in 1991, interviewing a number of people. Many of those were killed in the Santa Cruz massacre, one of the reasons that led Sword to resolve to contribute to the struggle for self-determination. She moved to Jakarta in 1992, where she worked not only as an English teacher but, beyond this cover, also for the underground movement, under aliases such as Ruby Blade and Mukya. In this function, she also began to communicate, at first through letters, with the imprisoned Gusmão, eventually leading her to visiting the guerilla leader in prison and even, facilitated by easily corruptible guards smuggling a laptop to him, thereby linking Xanana Gusmão directly to the ‘network society’ where much of the international East Timor activism was being carried out during the latter half of the 1990s.

**Resistance reorganizes – and continues.**

Upon Xanana Gusmão’s capture, José Ramos Horta immediately announced that Gusmão was no longer the leader of the resistance, to render void any statement made under duress.48 Inside East Timor, leadership passed over to Ma’Huno, who in a November 20 declaration formally restructured the leadership with himself as the highest field commander, Francisco Guterres (Lu-Olu) and Konis Santana as vice-secretaries and Taur Matan Ruak as Falintil’s operational commander. Ma’Huno also confirmed José Ramos Horta’s as CNRM’s highest representative abroad, and declared that Gusmão was still a symbol of resistance. ABRI Commander Theo Syafei followed up his success in capturing Xanana Gusmão by also arresting his successor, Ma’Huno, in April 1993.49 By then, Xanana Gusmão’s executive powers had been officially reinstated at a March meeting in Dili between leaders of the resistance. Obviously, Xanana’s ability to lead the resistance was, at least for the time being, circumscribed by his imprisonment.50

José Ramos Horta announced in July 1993 that CNRM would henceforth, until such time when Xanana’s powers had been fully reinstated, have a three-headed leadership similar to

49 Ma’Huno was hidden from the public for 18 months, during which time he was undergoing interrogation and kept in different locations by Indonesian troops, without being charged or formally jailed. He finally ended up in house arrest in Dili, under close surveillance by the authorities (Louise Williams, ‘Worn by struggle, guerillas wait for fruits of new era’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 June 1998.
50 Ibid.
Frelilin, since May 1990, headed by Konis Santana as head of the armed resistance, Pedro Nunes, a.k.a. Sabalae, as head of the clandestine front, now renamed CEL/FC (Comité Executivo da Luta/Frente Clandestina, the Executive Committee of Struggle/Clandestine Front), with Horta as head of the diplomatic front.\textsuperscript{51} Constântio Pinto was by then an active member of this front.\textsuperscript{52}

As for Frelilin, the Deputy Head of the Frelilin External Delegation, Marí Alkatíri, called a meeting of the CCDEF (Central Council of Frelilin External Delegation) in Lisbon, from 5 to 8 August 1993. The CCDEF had been mandated by the Frelilin presidential trio - with Konis Santana as secretary after the arrest of Ma’Huno, - and entrusted to reorganize the Frelilin external wing. At the meeting, Abílio Araújo was removed from his positions both as head of the Frelilin external delegation, and as Frelilin representative for Europe and Portugal, due to acts of subordination against the Frelilin leadership in East Timor. Likewise, the Frelilin Committee in Portugal was dissolved, due to its support of Araújo. Two new Frelilin Committees were organised in Portugal in place of the old one, and the leadership of Frelilin’s external delegation was from now a collective, consisting of Mari Alkatirí, Roque Rodrigues, José Luis Guterres and Alfredo Borges Ferreira. Roque Rodrigues was designated senior Frelilin representative for Portugal and Europe, replacing Abílio Araújo in this position.

While the arrests of the Falintil leaders halted guerrilla activities in the territory, the clandestine resistance of East Timorese youth continued on an even larger scale. Apart from demonstrating when foreign dignitaries visited Dili or Jakarta, the young people of East Timor found a highly efficient way of getting the attention of the outside world and at the same time providing the political activists in exile with new blood. The policy of seeking refuge at foreign embassies had begun on 19 June 1989 (cf. Ch. 12), and rapidly became an instrument of resistance which annoyed and embarrassed both Jakarta and the embassies which were the aim of the actions. In July 1993 seven youths were declined political asylum after entering the Swedish and Finnish embassies, but still managed to leave in December that year for Portugal.

**Bishop Belo and ETAN – influencing US Congress**

Shortly after Xanana’s imprisonment, Bishop Belo visited North America for the first time, following an invitation to attend a meeting of the American Catholic Bishops. The meeting took place in New Orleans in June 1993. He then went to Canada to meet representatives of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, an organisation that had continued its solidarity work for East Timor since the former bishop, Dom Martinho, visited Canada ten years earlier. In Canada, he also met with government officials, something he also did when he continued his journey to Washington. There he held meetings with, among others, President Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, and with members of Congress, including Tony Hall, long-time supporter of East Timor. Consistently, he argued that the most pressing need for his people was that Indonesian troops withdraw from the


\textsuperscript{52} Taur Matan Ruak was at the time the most senior of the leaders on the inside. When Ma’Huno issued and circulated his ‘November 20 declaration’, he was assisted in this by two priests in the Ainaro parish. One of the priests stated many years later in an interview with Awet Twelde Weldemichael in Dili May 11, 2006, that they were also instrumental in installing his replacement upon Ma’Huno’s arrest. Unable to reach Taur Matan Ruak, they deemed it necessary to avoid creating the image that the resistance lacked a strong leadership; hence the appointment of Konis Santana as head of the armed wing of the resistance (Twelde Weldemichael, op. cit., p. 269.)
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territory. One result of the meetings was that Tony Hall decided to nominate Belo for the Nobel Peace prize. Another was that a group of forty-three senators persuaded President Bill Clinton to discuss East Timor with Suharto at a planned meeting in Tokyo in July 1993.53

The pressure generated by ETAN’s activities and the visit by Bishop Belo led to a blockage of a transfer of F-5 fighter planes to Indonesia. The Clinton administration also co-sponsored a resolution critical of Indonesia at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 1993.54 US Congress had already in October 1992, as a response to the Santa Cruz massacre – and opposed by the US State Department - cut off Indonesia’s International Military Education and Training (IMET) aid. As a response, the Suharto regime established an Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, usually abbreviated to Komnas-HAM) in June 1993, presumably with the immediate aim to avoid further international criticism in the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, scheduled to begin a week after.55 Komnas-HAM, perhaps to the surprise of many, proved to be quite critical toward the Indonesian government on many issues, not the least because of pressure exerted by Indonesian NGOs. As Komnas-HAM entered the transnational network of human rights organizations, it also would have been increasingly difficult – and embarrassing - for the government to seriously constrain its activities.56

ETAN’s relative success in Washington depended on its ability to establish credibility with Congress and among executive agencies. Given the network’s limited size, reach, and activist base, it could only hope to affect US policy by establishing relationships with sympathetic senators and representatives who were in a position to restrict military aid, training, and weapons sales to Indonesia. Beginning in 1994, ETAN organized annual lobby days that brought scores of activists to Washington from around the country to press for an end to US military aid to Indonesia, cultivating a critical mass of Congressional allies in the process. Since East Timor was initially a relatively unknown issue, facing no active counter-lobbying, activists won over many Congressional offices to their side with just a few visits, phone calls, or constituent letters. As a result, between 1992 and 1999 ETAN and its allies succeeded in halting most types of military aid and training for Indonesia. In September 1993, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously adopted an amendment by Senator Russell Feingold to condition major arms sales to Indonesia on human rights improvements in East Timor. When US Congress banned small arms sales to Indonesia and cut off funds for military training, this led, however, to the State Department interpreting the decision to not

55 The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, 14-25 June 1993, attracted some 7,000 participants, including academics, treaty bodies, national institutions and representatives of more than 800 NGOs. On 25 June 1993, representatives of 171 States adopted by consensus the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action. This declaration, later also endorsed at the UN, took historic new steps to promote and protect the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples, supported the creation of a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, recommended the proclamation by the General Assembly of an international decade of the world’s indigenous peoples, called for the universal ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the establishment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights. The UN also did so through its Resolution 48/141, on 20 December 1993. The Vienna Declaration also emphasized the need for speedy ratification of other human rights instruments.
exclude Indonesia’s purchase of military training with its own funds.57 I will return to this matter presently.

Back in Dili – more visitors from overseas.

Bishop Belo returned to Dili in July 1993, but by then he did not feel as isolated as he had done before. The interest with which he had been met in North America continued on his own home turf, when he was visited by three members of the Swedish parliament. After leaving Timor, chocked by the atmosphere of terror, they called for an arms embargo on Indonesia and a referendum under the control of the United Nations. Like Tony Hall, they also decided to nominate Bishop Belo for the Nobel Peace prize, until a free election under United Nations control was held. Unbeknownst to the Bishop, this move was also supported by members of parliament in Portugal and Japan.

In September 1993, a group of US congressional staff members arrived in Dili. In spite of heavy military presence at the occasion, some youths arrived early in the morning of September 5 at the Bishop’s house to attend the morning mass and to wait for the right moment to stage a demonstration in sight of the visitors. As the Bishop did not want his residence to be used for demonstrations, he asked the youngsters to leave. Seeing that the house was surrounded by military police, Belo decided that he himself would drive the young boys and girls in a truck and drop them off near their homes. So, there was no demonstration when the congressional staff arrived shortly afterwards, but still a heavy presence by Intel, the military intelligence. Demonstration or no demonstration, it was all too clear to the Americans that they had arrived in a police state. The day after, the would-be demonstrators that the Bishop had escorted home, were abducted by Indonesian military and beaten savagely.58

Talks are resumed

As mentioned earlier (cf. Ch. 11), the UN in 1982 had deferred the question of East Timor to its General-Secretary, with an obligation to work towards ‘a just and comprehensible solution.’ The talks between the General-Secretary and representatives of Portugal and Indonesia were broken off shortly before the Dili massacre and resumed in September 1992. There were three further rounds of meetings of the Indonesian and Portuguese Foreign Ministers, Ali Alatas and José Manuel Durão Barroso, with UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali between December 1992 and September 1993. In advance of the September 1993 meeting US Secretary of State Christopher wrote to the two Foreign Ministers, urging them to do more to reach an agreement.59 Apparently the US interest made a difference. After that meeting Secretary-General Boutros Ghali issued a statement which outlined seven areas in which the parties would continue to seek agreement.60

In January 1994 two senior officials from the office of the UN Secretary-General, Eritrean Tamrat Samuel and Francesc Vendrell from Spain, visited Lisbon, Jakarta and East Timor. Their primary purpose was to formulate a new initiative in time for the next round of talks

59 Ibid.
between the two sides in May 1994 in Geneva. High on their agenda were consultations with the East Timorese, meaning that the Secretary-General’s mandate from the UN resolution 37/30 of 1982 to consult ‘with all parties directly concerned’, was being implemented for the first time.

In Jakarta, the UN team visited the East Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmão in prison. Gusmão had by then found ways to re-establish communication with the resistance, and in a March 1994 meeting between leaders from the clandestine front and Falintil his executive powers were declared reinstated. The UN envoys also visited East Timor and held discussions with East Timorese, including Bishop Belo. Talks between the representatives of Portugal and Indonesia in May 1994 resulted in an informal meeting in October 1994 between the Indonesian Foreign Minister and three of the leaders of the East Timorese resistance in exile, José Ramos Horta of CNRM, José Luis Gutерres of Fretilin and João Carrascalão of UDT. This was a major breakthrough, since Indonesia then agreed (however grudgingly) to participate in confidence-building measures. Presumably, Jakarta was responding to pressures from the European Union and US President Bill Clinton, realising that circumstances had changed with the ending of the Cold War. The Governments of Portugal and Indonesia had by then agreed to an All-Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogue. The plan was that thirteen Timorese from abroad would meet with another thirteen Timorese from within East Timor.

An Indonesian diplomatic move to split the Timorese resistance.

In a parallel diplomatic move with the apparent aim to sow discord and split the unity within the Timorese resistance, Indonesia – without consulting neither the UN, Portugal nor, of course, the CNRM - assembled a group of East Timorese outside London for two days of talks in mid-December 1993. Former UDT President Lopes da Cruz had been appointed Indonesia’s Roving Ambassador for East Timor in April 1993. In the following months he negotiated with Abílio Araújo, at the time still head of Fretilin’s external delegation (and one of the two survivors of the group of seven Maoists which arrived in Portuguese Timor in 1974/75). This was seen as a part of a “reconciliation” campaign, led by Suharto’s daughter Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana (nicknamed “Tutut”).

Among those present at the talks were Abílio Araújo, Rogério Lobato and a group of six Timorese from Macau. Spokesman for the Indonesian side was Francisco Lopes da Cruz, who by then had been formally expelled from UDT because of ‘crimes of high treason against the

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61 Cipinang had an entire wing reserved for political prisoners from all over the archipelago. One of them was West Papuan Jakob Rumbiak, who after receiving a life sentence for subversion (i.e. political activities directed towards self-determination) had suffered a ten-year ordeal during which he was locked up in – and tortured in – six different Indonesian prisons, of which Tangerang prison in Java was the worst. By comparison, Cipinang was a breeze, “the food was very good,” and Rumbiak has described how he befriended Gusmão and how the political wing became “like a university”, under the latter’s tutelage, as Gusmão held court and explained to activists how the East Timorese resistance network operated (Andrew Kilwert, ‘The NI interview’, New Internationalist, issue 321, March 2000.) Accessed at http://library.chevalier.nsw.edu.au/ni/issue321/interview.htm
64 A. Barbedo de Magalhães, The East Timor Issue and the Symposium of Oporto University. Oporto University, 1995, p. 10.
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party, the people and the fatherland.'67 Also present were Indonesian diplomats stationed in
various European countries and representatives of Indonesian military intelligence. The only
official statement emanating from this meeting was that a series of reconciliation talks would
follow.68 This proposal was immediately rejected by prominent figures in the Timorese exile
communities in Portugal and Australia, notably José Ramos Horta of CNRM and João
Carrascalão of UDT. As Abílio Araújo was labelled ‘Fretilin leader’ by the presidential
daughter Tutut and Indonesian journalists in describing the event, his presence at this pro-
integration meeting could be interpreted that Fretilin had given up its stance on independence
for East Timor. The fact was, as noted earlier, that he had been expelled from his positions as
head of Fretilin’s External Delegation and Fretilin’s representative in Europe four months
ahead of the London meeting. Xanana Gusmão and Bishop Belo both denounced the London
talks in January 1994.69

Unity vs squabbles

The above points to the fact that there was indeed a degree of disunity among the Timorese in
exile which could be capitalized upon by the Indonesian side. In 1992, six years after the
Convergence, Justino Guterres sadly noted that while the people of East Timor - apart from
the ninja thugs - were united against the invader, the community in exile was plagued by the
internal conflicts caused by the civil war in 1975. He also wrote that that this, “continues to be
a hindrance to the effective channelling of efforts by the Community towards their common
goal – self-determination and independence.”70

The then Australia-exiled Justino Guterres wrote a BA-thesis called Refugee Politics:
Timorese in Exile (1992) in which one chapter provides an illuminating picture of the
difficulties in overcoming the split within the Timorese Diaspora. While there existed on an
official political level a National Convergence since 1986, Guterres wrote that at the general
community level there was little convergence. He bemoaned the fact that while people inside
East Timor were united against the invader, the Timorese Diaspora had not yet managed to
unite in a fully efficient way. Disunity existed not only between the adherents of Fretilin and
UDT, but also within the respective party groups.

In 1989 there was a temporary break within the Fretilin leadership, resulting from
differences between José Ramos Horta and Abílio Araújo, the Lisbon domiciled Fretilin
External Delegation Chief. As we have seen, Indonesia managed to take advantage of the
discord within Fretilin by getting Abílio Araújo involved in the so called reconciliation talks,
which eventually led to Araújo losing his position as Chief of the Fretilin External Delegation.

67 CAVR chapter 7, Self Determination, 2006, p. 86.
68 There was a second meeting, also in London, in late September 1994. The persons involved were the same as
the first time, with the added presence of a UN observer, a fact which one of the Indonesian diplomats present
was described as ‘significant’, and that it ‘could mean an official recognition of the talks by the United Nations.’ The
Portuguese government was monitoring the talks, but voiced neither rejection nor approval. Again, the meeting
was met with ‘vehement repudiation’ by the East Timorese resistance, who saw the London talks as an attempt
by Jakarta to portray the East Timor question as merely an internal squabble between the people of its 27th
province. (Bob Mantiri, UNSG’s Man at London Talks, accessed at http://www.library.ohiou.edu/indopubs/1994/10/02/0004.html . See also ‘Reconciliation II on the Horizon’
Documents on East Timor from PeaceNet and Connected Computer Networks. Volume 32, 1994: White Plains,
08.pdf
69 George J. Aditjondro, Timor Lorosa’e on the Crossroad. Timor’s transformation from Jakarta’s colony to a
global capitalist outpost. Jakarta: CefSoS, 2001, p. 8, see also Feith 1993, op. cit., p. 11, and Geoffrey C. Gunn,
A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor. Manila & Sydney: Journal of
Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1994, pp. 1-3, and Fretilin, Central Council of Fretilin External Delegation,
of Technology, 1992, p. 3.
Ramos Horta had by then left Fretilin for a position as Special Representative of CNRM, the umbrella organisation which was formed in 1988 by Xanana Gusmão precisely to overcome difficulties such as the ones that are discussed here.

As regards UDT, the political commission created in Lisbon in 1979 (cf. Ch. 11) was dissolved by UDT Vice-President João Carrascalão and Secretary-General Domingos de Oliveira on 28 August 1990. Neither Paulo Pires, President of the Political Commission following the death of Moises da Costa Amaral, nor his Vice-President, Vicente Guterres, were notified by Carrascalão and de Oliveira of their dismissal; they read about it in Publico, a Portuguese newspaper, on 31 August 1990. The grounds given for dissolving the Political Commission was that the UDT constitution which created it was illegal.

Events like these and the continued distrust between UDT and Fretilin despite the existence of the National Convergence, led to the emergence of what Guterres called independents, or ‘freelance fighters’. Many of these called themselves ‘Xananistas’, indicating an allegiance to the struggle for independence itself, rather than to established parties. They were generally young, educated Timorese who were very active in the political struggle, and they often argued that many of the older generation would always be seen, justly or not, as the political players who led the country into the 1975 civil war which eventually gave Indonesia the excuse to invade.

Many of these young activists joined CNRM, which had its head office in Sydney, where José Ramos Horta, by then Professor of International Law, was running a Diplomacy Training Programme at the University of New South Wales. This programme was designed specifically to educate students in the functioning of the various UN branches and the art of lobbying in these.

Besides the UDT and Fretilin party organisation and the overriding organisation CNRM, there were East Timorese non-political organisations such as East Timor Relief Organisation (ETRA), formed with the twin goals of providing resources for the East Timorese community in Australia to campaign in the wider community, and raising funds for humanitarian relief efforts for those inside East Timor.

ETRA published, in co-operation with CNRM, a monthly information paper called Matebian News. Also politically non-affiliated and co-operating with CNRM was the Timorese Association in Victoria (TAV) which, apart from social and cultural activities, sponsored some young Timorese in participating in the above-mentioned Diplomacy Training Programme at the University of New South Wales as well as visiting the UN Commission for Human Rights Violations in Geneva.

The Santa Cruz massacre on 19 November 1991 had a tremendous impact on the East Timorese in exile, fostering a deep sense of unity between the various Timorese groups. This sense of unity was, paradoxically enough, only strengthened by the Indonesian use of so-called ninja gangs to harass the East Timorese youth. As in Dili, the East Timorese in exile reacted with shock to the news that some young Timorese were deliberately seeking out and harming other Timorese. ‘If we can’t trust each other, who can we trust?’ was a phrase that Patricia Thatcher often heard during her interviews with Australian-exiled Timorese. The massacre not only fostered a deep sense of unity between the various Mestizo/Timorese

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72 Guterres, op. cit., pp. 68-72.
73 During his years of exile, Ramos-Horta received his Master of Arts from Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio, was a Fellow in International Relations at St. Anthony’s College, Oxford, and attended The Hague Academy of International Law and the International Institute of Human Rights at Strasbourg.
74 As part of this scheme, Horta also persuaded Melbornian busdriver/activist Abel Guterres to attend a diplomacy course at Oxford University, England. Guterres successfully completed the course, and later became Ambassador to Australia of independent Timor Leste.
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groups, but initiated for the first time a public response of unity and solidarity from the Timor-born Chinese.

In the mid-1970s, the number of East Timorese that lived outside of Timor numbered only a few dozen. Most of these were studying in Lisbon or Macau, while only very few individuals had made it to the southern neighbour, Australia. A handful of Fretelin representatives were sent abroad ahead of the Indonesian invasion in December 1975, and 1,647 East Timorese reached Darwin in Australia between August and late September 1975. 672 of these were ethnic Chinese. In addition to these, 929 UDT-refugees in West Timor were repatriated to Portugal in 1976 through UN assistance.

This nucleus of an East Timorese Diaspora was enlarged after 1978, when the Australian Government set up the Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP). Under the SHP Timor-born residents in Australia were allowed to sponsor relatives who wished to come to Australia, enabling 1,404 Timorese to come from Portugal to Australia between 1981-86, and 3,168 ethnic Chinese, primarily from East Timor, during the same period. By 1986, 61% of the 6560 Timorese born residents in Australia in 1986 claimed Chinese ancestry, compared to 19.2% claiming to have mixed Portuguese and Timorese ancestry and 19.7% who claimed Timorese only ancestry.

The SHP was followed in the early 1990s by the Special Assistance Plan (SAP), designed to aid Timorese in repatriating to Australia. In 1992-1993 some 1,400 individuals emigrated from Portugal to Australia as part of this programme. The reasons for wanting to emigrate to Australia from Portugal were, according to Thatcher, family unification, Australia’s proximity to East Timor and improved life chances for their children. They brought with them, because of their recent history, a profound sense of loss accentuated by bewilderment and bitterness at what they saw as both Portuguese and Australian betrayal. To this was also added anger and frustration at the lack of action by the international community toward Indonesia. All had been separated from family members and a highly valued cultural tradition; all shared the ambivalent feeling of both gratitude for their acceptance, and anger and disillusionment with Australian attitudes and actions regarding Timorese sovereignty.

Outside of the official programmes, only a small number of people managed to leave East Timor by bribing their way from island to island within the Indonesian archipelago, and later clandestinely entering a neighbouring country. Once there, they obtained Portuguese or Taiwanese (in the case of the ethnic Chinese) travel documents and made their way to Portugal, as it was easier to enter Australia from Portugal than from Taiwan.

Not until 1995 did anybody manage to escape East Timor by boat to Australia, despite the relatively short distance between the two countries. By the mid-1990s, the number of East Timorese living abroad was ca. 20,000. About 15,000 lived in Australia, the majority of the rest in Portugal or Macau.

The majority of the Timorese population in Australia above the age of thirty had long avoided any active participation with either UDT or Fretelin, largely as a result of their traumatic experiences with political processes surrounding decolonisation, which led to civil war and flight out of Timor. This was not the only cause of the avoidance of politics outside their own circles. UDT members have generally been suspicious of Australians involved in East Timor activism, seeing them as leftists.

77 Ibid, p. 6.
79 Thatcher 1990, op. cit., p. 5.
81 Personal communication from Patricia Thatcher, April 1997.
The involvement with East Timor activists in the wider community had been left to a small group of mostly Fretilin-supporters. The first Fretilin demonstration was held in Sydney in 1981. Abílio Araújo and Roque Rodrigues addressed a large rally in Melbourne in 1983, after the election of Bob Hawke’s Labor government had made it easier for Fretilin to operate in Australia. There was also a demonstration at the Labor Party conference in Canberra later that year. Since he withdrew Falintil from Fretilin, Xanana was listened to with increasing frequency also by the non-left part of the Timorese diaspora, and he was regarded with great reverence by many, something which had not changed following his imprisonment. Before he was captured in 1992, Xanana Gusmão regularly recorded messages onto cassettes which were smuggled out of Timor and then copied and distributed within the East Timorese diaspora in Australia and elsewhere, and each year there would be a New Year’s message, published in the various newsletters of support groups abroad.

Paradoxically, as much else in this story, Australia was more and more becoming the most important centre of East Timorese resistance in exile. While Portugal was taking an increasingly active role in voicing the rights of the East Timorese in international political fora, an issue which Australia officially saw as settled, there had in the early 1990s clearly been a shift from Portugal to Australia in terms of not only the number of resident East Timorese but also the political weight of their spokesmen. The power struggles within both UDT and Fretilin were won by the Australian factions. The establishment of CNRM’s head office in Sydney, rather than in Lisbon, was but one indicator of the importance that was attached to Australia by leading East Timorese politicians. At the same time, Australia’s role in the Indonesian annexation of East Timor and subsequent acceptance of the occupation, not only de facto but also de jure, caused considerable bitterness among the East Timorese as well as considerable feelings of guilt among many Australians.

Among some it also gave rise to feelings of anger and infused a strong sense of commitment. On 20th October 1991 a group of six East Timorese and one Australian activist came to visit Hilton Deakin, the then Vicar-General of the Melbourne archdiocese, at his office. They asked Deakin if he would arrange a memorial mass on the 7th December, the sixteenth anniversary of the invasion. Deakin agreed, but following the Santa Cruz massacre on November 12, he decided to instead arrange a funeral mass. Around a thousand Timorese gathered in St Patrick’s cathedral, plus representatives of the trade union movement, human rights groups and NGOs. For Deakin, the mass marked the beginning of a long engagement with solidarity work for East Timor. He visited Bishop Belo in Dili a number of times, and took upon himself to be a ‘voice for the voiceless’, criticizing ‘the roar of silence’ found with local media and fellow Catholic bishops.

**ASEAN and East Timor.**

Up until the mid-1990s, the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries virtually ignored East Timor, out of “ASEAN solidarity” and also not to embarrass Indonesia, one of its more powerful members. This was the more remarkable after the declaration in 1977 that ASEAN would be a ‘Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality’ – while at the same time...
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time one of its members was conducting a war of attrition just outside of this zone (according to international law) or even inside the zone (according to Indonesian law, and accepted by the fellow members of ASEAN).

The foundation for a change of view vis-à-vis East Timor within Southeast Asia, and the wider area of Pacific rim countries, was lain at the People’s Plan for the 21st Century (PP21) assembly in Bangkok in December 1992. The PP21 was a gathering of activists from some 500 international, mostly Asian, NGOs, with the aim to support democracy in Thailand and elsewhere. At this meeting, José Ramos Horta was one of the speakers, and one of the resolutions emerging from the PP21 declared Indonesia guilty of genocide in East Timor.

Many of those present also noted the general lack of information and knowledge about East Timor among the Southeast Asia/Pacific rim nations; and it was decided that an Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET) was to be arranged in Manila in May 1994. Among the sponsors of APCET were the Parliamentarians for East Timor and the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor. So far so good. But then the political arm-twisting began …

Indonesia tried in various ways to make the Filipino government cancel the planned meeting in Manila, based on the principle that internal affairs within ASEAN were nobody else’s business. In spite of Manila sending a special envoy to Jakarta to make clear that the constitution of the Philippines provided for freedom of association and free speech, Indonesia went ahead with the threat to suspend a meeting in Jakarta between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), an armed Muslim insurgency organisation based on the southern island of Mindanao, and representatives of the Philippines government. Indonesia had in 1993 been active in arranging a ceasefire between the two parties, and the discussion was planned to continue in Jakarta in June 1994. Then followed cancellations of planned investments by Indonesian industrialists in Davao, Philippines and also of several business and student delegations from Indonesia to the Philippines.

Initially, it seemed as if the Filipino government would not comply with the Indonesians and stop the conference, but on May 27 an organisation called the Philippines Indonesia Society Inc, filed an injunction against the conference at the Quezon regional court, whereupon the University of Manila announced that its facilities could no longer be used for the conference. However, the Faculty of law appealed against the injunction in the High Court and thus the legal battle surrounding the conference continued.

Not surprisingly, the whole affair attracted a great deal of media interest, giving the planned conference massive and unwanted (from the perspective of the governments involved) attention. This was not lessened when, following a press conference with some of the foreign participants on May 30, the Filipino government announced that all members of international NGOs would be deported.

The following day, a large demonstration was held at the campus of the University of the Philippines. By now, more foreign guests had arrived, and they kept coming. The conference was formally opened at the faculty of Law on June 1, while at the same time the government declared that ten foreign nationals would be arrested and sent out of the country. However, the revocation of visas for the ten was revoked – this was after all an arrangement at the Faculty of Law – further humiliating the authorities and further increasing media attention.

While the Filipino government failed in kicking out the foreign participants, it did manage to keep some would-be attendants on the outside. Among those not being allowed to enter the Philippines were, not surprisingly, José Ramos Horta of CNRM and Mari Alkatiri of Fretilin. Another person being prevented from entering the Philippines was Mairead Corrigan Maguire from Ireland, who had been rewarded with a shared Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for her efforts

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in organizing a women’s movement against violence. After her rebuttal in Manila, she joined those who nominated Bishop Belo for this prize.

Not only was the conference held, though with a limited number of attendants – one of them being the indefatigable Bishop Soma of Nagoya -, but it also spawned the formation of APCET (the Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor), borrowing its acronym from the Manila conference, and formed with the specific aim to support East Timor’s struggle for self-determination in this region. Of specific embarrassment to the Suharto regime, may have been the appearance at the Manila conference of a spokesperson for Indonesian human rights group the Pijar Foundation, who extended the support of the Indonesian pro-democracy movement to the struggle for self-determination in East Timor.

The Manila incident coincided in time with the ending of the period of relative openness, keterbukaan, in Jakarta, as the Suharto government banned the three major political weeklies, Tempo, Editor and DeTik. All three had taken openness too literally and had, among other things, taken the liberty to report on scandals involving people close to Suharto. However, demands for a political opening-up and democratization continued on different levels in Indonesian society, despite Suharto’s attempts to stop it. According to Uhlin, the social base of the Suharto regime narrowed during the 1980s. As some among the military and economic elites gradually distanced themselves from the ageing dictator, this also created some space for a non-elite opposition to develop.

One month later, a one day forum on East Timor was held in Kuala Lumpur. Indonesia, not willing to evoke memories of the Konfrontasi period (cf Chapter 8), and presumably even less willing to risk provoking modern day Malaysia, a leading economic member of ASEAN, limited its reaction to a formal protest against the forum. In July 1994, Indonesia successfully argued at an ASEAN summit for the inclusion of a principle of non-interference in internal affairs between ASEAN members. As a result of this, eleven East Timorese who had planned to participate at a human rights conference in Bangkok – coinciding with the ASEAN meeting – were not allowed to enter Thailand. The Thai Foreign Minister declared that “ASEAN has unanimously resolved not to intervene in the East Timor issue and Thailand has acted in line with the ASEAN resolution. We will not allow foreign NGOs to use our country as a venue to attack our neighbouring countries.” His Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, when asked by reporters whether Indonesia was attempting to block discussion on East Timor within ASEAN said: “We have never blocked anything. East Timor has never been discussed in the 27 years of ASEAN, so why should it be now?”

International Criminal Tribunals.

If non-interference was the regional name of the game, elsewhere the outcries against massive breaches of human rights led to the creation of legal machineries with the aim of punishing those most guilty, regardless of position in society. While the worst scenarios seen in East Timor in the 1970’s and early 1980’s had largely been hidden from the eyes of the world, the global society watched in horror the atrocities taking place in Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the early 1990s. In both cases, the UN failed to act resolutely to stop the humanitarian disasters taking place on the ground. However, in response to these atrocities,

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89 Simpson, op. cit. p. 461.
93 Ibid, p. 15.
and its own fiasco, the United Nations Security Council established an ad hoc tribunal for each of these situations, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in 1994. Weschler describes the establishment of the Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as “a groundbreaking move, the first explicit acknowledgement that accountability for the most egregious war crimes and crimes against humanity was key to the maintenance of peace and security and that individual responsibility for such crimes was of concern to the Council.”

A meeting with guerrilla leader Konis Santana

In 1994, Australian journalist, long-time East Timor activist and now resident of Portugal Jill Jolliffe was smuggled inside East Timor under a false name. After following a long and winding road through the Indonesian archipelago, as described in her book Finding Santana. Jolliffe writes of the necessity of organizing the trip through a ‘clean’ network of East Timorese; as many were now infiltrated by Indonesian intelligence agents. The initial contacts in Portugal were made through the somewhat controversial Rogério Lobato, who introduced her to a person who only presented himself as ‘Natan’. From Jakarta onwards, her travel was organized by members of the also controversial AST (Associação Socialista Timorense, the Timorese Socialist Association), a left-wing splinter group from Fretilin that was considered ‘extremist’ by some other groups. She met Falintil leader Konis Santana between 11-13 August and afterwards described him as an ill and somewhat disillusioned, from the lack of outside help, person who was the leader of an ill-equipped and spread out army with difficult communication problems that was up against 13 to 15 Indonesian battalions, with around 9,000 soldiers, plus the East Timorese paramilitary forces fighting for the Indonesians.

Some Falintil soldiers had been wearing the same clothes for many years, only a few had good boots, some wore flimsy sandals. Only a few were well armed. This could have been remedied relatively easy; if they only had the funds needed they could have bought weaponry from Indonesian soldiers, but there was no money coming in. ‘The population supports us, feeds and hides us when they can’, Santana aid, ‘but they put their lives at it risk because they are always under the watch of Intel.’ He continued:

Our logistic problems are the greatest concern … Many times we have had to suspend operations because we have had nothing to eat. How many of our guerrillas have died trying to survive eating grass and roots, in hiding because the enemy knew our movements? Life is increasingly difficult. So many have died on intelligence missions, communicating between our units. We need means of communication, we have already told our people abroad, but we’re still waiting for medium-wave transmitters to communicate between units ... We have to count on capturing Indonesian arms and our blood is spilt in these encounters. This is a very difficult struggle and we can count only on our own forces.

Konis Santana suffered pain from tooth decay and had bouts of malaria. He also, as did many of his men, had un-extracted bullets in his body, which he got during an attack in the Indonesian offensive that followed upon Robert Domm’s visit to Xanana Gusmão in the bush in 1990 (cf. Ch.12). Six of his most reliable soldiers and closest friends had died on this

95 The inclusion of Jolliffe in the Portuguese delegation that was to arrive Dili in 1991 had been the pretext for Indonesia to cancel the visit; a cancellation which eventually led up to the Santa Cruz massacre. Cf. Ch. 12.
96 Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 81.
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occasion. Overall, the meeting with Konis Santana confirmed what everyone already knew; that Indonesia had won the war in strictly military terms. In non-military terms Falintil, however, still fulfilled an important role as the ‘keeper of the flame’ in the mountains of East Timor. Jolliffe made another failed attempt to meet with the guerillas in November 1994, but was captured by the Indonesians in Baucau and sent out of Timor.

APEC November 1994

On November 12, 1994, the third anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre, twenty-nine East Timorese youths entered the US Embassy in Jakarta. The action at the US embassy was timed to coincide with President Bill Clinton’s visit to Indonesia for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit meeting in Bogor, Java. Situated forty miles from Jakarta, the location at Bogor was intended to showcase Indonesia’s economic accomplishments and investment opportunities. Instead the bold action of the East Timorese at the American embassy occurred at the worst possible moment from Jakarta’s standpoint, when the largest group of foreign leaders and media representatives in history was visiting Indonesia.

The action had been meticulously planned, with Xanana Gusmão in his cell and José Ramos Horta on the outside laying out the strategy, and Kirsty Sword and a Renetil leader adjusting the finer details on the ground. This occasion also marked the first time that Sword acted as an airborne messenger between Gusmão and other members of the resistance when she flew to Macau for a meeting with Horta with instructions from Gusmão formulated in a six-page briefing. Ahead of the summit, Gusmão had written a personal letter to Bill Clinton, in which he pointed out parallels between the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and Indonesia’s occupation of East Timor. He also asked Clinton to bring up the issue of East Timor with Suharto.

For several days, the East Timorese action at the US embassy received a great deal of international media attention. Editorials in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Times of London, the Globe and Mail (Canada), and the Wall Street Journal, among others, gave serious attention to East Timor. At the same time, a quick and violent solution to the incident was a non-possibility for the Indonesian authorities during the APEC meeting. The foreign dignitaries, including US President Bill Clinton, left Jakarta on November 16, and so did the foreign reporters. Some of those also ventured to Dili, but they were few and only there on short duration. On November 22, the situation at the US embassy in Jakarta was also resolved in a peaceful manner, when the twenty-nine East Timorese were promised safe conduct out of Indonesia and were subsequently flown to Portugal.

Meanwhile in East Timor

In November 1994 began a series of events that occurred in conjunction with the APEC summit meeting and the third anniversary of the November 12, 1991, Dili massacre. On November 12, an East Timorese man was stabbed to death in Dili by a Buginese trader, a

\[\text{\textsuperscript{97}}\text{Ibid, pp. 79-83.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{98}}\text{The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a forum for 21 Pacific Rim countries that seeks to promote free trade and economic cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Initiated by Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke in early 1989, a meeting between political ministers was held in Canberra later that year, followed by a summit chaired by Bill Clinton on Baker Island in 1993 and the above-mentioned meeting in Bogor in 1994.}\]

transmigrasi from South Sulawesi. While the killing was not politically motivated, it set off a riot in which an East Timorese crowd set fire to several houses in a Bugis neighborhood where the streets were filled not only with angry youngsters.

Old men and women followed suit and joined the massive protests, the biggest ever in occupied East Timor.\(^{100}\)

Several demonstrations took place during the following two weeks, with youths unfurling banners calling for US President Clinton's help in securing independence and protection of human rights, as well as the release of Xanana Gusmao. On November 18, a demonstration in solidarity with the 29 in Jakarta unfolded in Dili. Scores of young people gathered at the cathedral, waving banners, calling for independence and the release of Xanana Gusmão. Everything was peaceful, until opponents began throwing rocks at them, and then things began to turn nasty, as teargas filled the air. A violent confrontation seemed imminent, in spite of the military commander and the cathedral parish priest both trying to calm down the situation to little effect. The situation grew increasingly tense, until Bishop Belo came to the scene, requested by both sides to mediate. His demands were that the demonstrators be allowed to go home and that there would be no retributions from the military nor the police. At the same time he demanded that the young people call off the demonstrations and stop using the church for political purposes. Neither side was happy about the demands but both sides accepted them.

On November 24, the day that the 29 students in Jakarta left for Portugal, a major demonstration took place on the University of East Timor campus. Some students started throwing stones at the police sent to break it up, whereupon the police fired several rounds of tear gas at the crowd. They then surrounded the campus, trapping some 400 students and faculty inside, until talks between students, university administrators and East Timor military commander Kiki Syahnakri led to a peaceful dispersal. As an answer to the pro-independence demonstrations, the government decided to organize its own demonstration and on November 26, a march in support of integration brought some 20,000 people out into the streets of Dili, while others threw stones and bottles at the marchers.

The relative constraint shown by the Indonesian military during the November 1994 demonstrations in Dili, where people were abducted and beaten but there were no outright killings indicated, that some ABRI commanders were more careful post-Santa Cruz. Being personally and openly involved with gross human rights violations, especially with foreigners present, might prove damaging to ones' career, and for the top brass in Jakarta there was now clearly a worry about international attention to East Timor, especially at such times as the APEC meeting. Some high ranking military officers even voiced the opinion that a changed approach towards East Timor was needed. Major General Adang Ruchiatna, commander of the military region that included East Timor even opined that East Timor should be granted special status within Indonesia. This idea the territory’s Governor, Abílio Osório Soares, adopted. Soares had close links with Suharto’s son-in-law Colonel Prabowo Subianto, and Prabowo in his turn discussed the idea with Xanana Gusmão during a visit to Cipinang jail. Clearly, the special status proposal had not yet been established at the top of Indonesian political hierarchy, and disappeared from the agenda when it was flatly rejected by Suharto at the end of 1994.\(^{101}\) It was to make a return within a few years, as ‘the autonomy proposal’, as we shall see later.

As a means to adjust to the new, post-Santa Cruz, situation, ABRI officially reduced its military presence in East Timor during the 1990s, while at the same time it increased operations to terrorise and humiliate the population – especially the urban resistance – by expanding the use of paramilitary gangs under the control of Kopassus (the Special Forces

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\(^{100}\) Ibid, pp. 228-230.

\(^{101}\) Crouch, op. cit., p. 155.
Command), such as Gada Paksi, Garda Pemuda Penegak Integrasi (Youth Guard for Upholding Integration), set up in 1994, “reportedly by Prabowo Subianto.”¹⁰² Now Gada Paksi’s youthful members continued and increased the ninja tradition of terror against their compatriots. They threw rocks at demonstrations, burned houses, set up roadblocks and abducted and killed members of the resistance.¹⁰³ The authorities also enforced military training of civil servants and students, establishing new militia organisations across the territory, often building on old organisations that had lain more or less dormant since the days of open war. A violent anti-riot police, Brimob, became an added increasingly important factor in this scheme.¹⁰⁴

On January 1, another Buginese trader stabbed an East Timorese to death in Baucau. The killer himself was attacked and later died of his wounds. The incident set off a riot in the Baucau market area, in which shops and kiosks were burned and the local police station stoned. As police were unable to control the crowd, soldiers from Battalion 745 were trucked in. At least one person was killed when soldiers opened fire at the crowd. The burning of the Baucau market threw the Bugis community in East Timor into a panic, and many sought refuge in military camps.

¹⁰² Dunn 2001, p. 11.
¹⁰³ Robinson, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
The Liquica killings

On 12 January 1995, Indonesian troops killed six villagers in the village of Gariana, in the Liquica district. This massacre was widely condemned internationally and Jakarta judged it wise to investigate the affair. President Suharto instructed General Feisal Tanjung, Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, to open an official inquiry. On February 7, a team of seven officers went to Dili to investigate, and as occurred after the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991 a Military Honor Council was formed to recommend disciplinary measures if soldiers were found to have violated military procedures. In a move which would have been unthinkable in 1991, five members of Komnas-HAM, the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission, visited the site of the killings on two occasions in February. General Tanjung, in a statement before the Indonesian Parliament on February 20, said that Falintil had been planning to attack Liquica and if the army had not responded quickly the town could have become a guerrilla base camp. At that time he stated that four of those killed had been informants for the guerrillas and two were active fighters. All six had been killed in the course of an effort to capture a guerrilla hideout.

On March 2, Komnas-HAM announced its dramatically different findings. The Commission stated that it had found evidence of acts of torture performed on the six victims prior to their death, and that they had all been civilians or non-combatants. The Military Honor Commission then announced that it would press charges against two soldiers for violating military procedures, and in June 1995 a military court in Bali sentenced an East Timorese soldier to four years in prison for killing the six. The Indonesian officer in charge received a four and a half year sentence for giving the order to execute the prisoners. Furthermore, the East Timor military commander, Kiki Syahnakri, was removed from his post. Clearly, something had changed when the massacre of a mere (!) six people in East Timor now warranted an investigation within ABRI, and harsher sentences were meted out than for those responsible for the Santa Cruz massacre.

Changing scenarios in Timor and on the international stage

It was now clear that the fight against those who struggled for independence had a different focus, as reflected in a statement by the Indonesian military commander of East Timor, Major-General Adang Ruhiatna, in the Indonesian magazine Forum Keadilan in March 1995. He said that he was prepared to kill all East Timorese – ‘we’re just waiting for the order.’ The major problem as he saw it was not the armed resistance fighters; ‘it’s the clandestine that have to be watched’, he said. ‘They’re everywhere in Dili ...’ Later interviewed by the Sydney Morning Herald on 17 July 1995, Ruhiatna offered the amazingly precise information that there were 214 members of Falintil, armed with 104 weapons, while clandestine resistance, according to him, numbered 3,000.

As a means to adjust to the new, post-Santa Cruz, situation, ABRI officially reduced its military presence in East Timor during the 1990s. At the same time it increased operations to terrorize and humiliate the population – especially the urban resistance – by expanding the use of paramilitary gangs under the control of Kopassus, the Special Forces Command. Since the late 1980’s, groups of young Timorese men, paid and controlled by Indonesian military, harassed the towns of East Timor after the fall of darkness. Dressed in black, and sometimes called called bufos, (clowns in Portuguese) they made the streets too dangerous to transverse at night, and especially so in Dili. From the mid-1990’s, these gangs, now known as ninjas.

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not only became more numerous, but also increasingly violent, beating up and intimidating their compatriots among the clandestine resistance. While the use of ninjas certainly scared the rest of the population, the tactic at the same time backfired. The knowledge that Timorese were deliberately seeking out and harming other Timorese shocked the community as a whole, and became a unifying factor as people came together to deal with what they saw as renegade Timorese.106

In February 1993, Prabowo Subianto became Commander of Group 3, the Special Forces (Kopassus) education center in West Java. From this position he initiated a systematic militarization of various parts of East Timorese society. There existed military training sessions for university students belonging to Menwa (Resimen Mahasiswa, the Student Regiment) at the University of East Timor, and over a thousand civil servants were sent on three-month training programs in Java and Bali. In July 1995, Prabowo initiated the formation of the Gada Paksi (Garda Pemuda Penegak Integrasi, Youth Guard for Upholding Integration.) Gada Paksi’s members continued their ninja tradition of terror against their compatriots. They threw rocks at demonstrations, burned houses, set up roadblocks and abducted and killed members of the resistance. Gada Paksi membership had swollen to over a thousand by 1996, and six hundred of the ‘youth guards’ were in May 1996 sent to Java to be trained by Kopassus.107

International pressure tightens

The above-quoted Major-General Adang Ruhiatna in his interview in Sydney Morning Herald also offered the novel – from the standpoint of a high-ranking ABRI officer – idea that ‘the key lies at the UN. So long as it is not finalised there, the situation will always be like this.’ 108

Perhaps the Major-General was referring to the resumed talks and contacts at the UN between representatives from Portugal and Indonesia in 1993 and 1994, and the fiasco of the ‘reconciliation talks’ in London. In early 1995, further talks in Geneva resulted in a plan to arrange an ‘All Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogue’ where Timorese from inside and outside East Timor were to meet and discuss under the auspices of the UN. Naturally, Jakarta wished to have a strong voice as to who were to be included in the talks, so the discussion dragged on for a couple of months.109

In the meantime, international pressure to find a solution to the East Timor dilemma was building. There were damning reports and recommended firm actions from their respective governments following visits by diplomatic missions to East Timor from France and Germany (on behalf of the European Union) and from Canada, Australia and the US during early 1995. By then, East Timor solidarity groups existed in more than twenty countries. Japan had no less than forty local groups, linked since 1988 by the Free East Timor Coalition. The East Timor network in Australia made East Timor the most important – and annoying - bilateral issue between Canberra and Jakarta. When APCET (Asia-Pacific Consultation on East Timor) held its second meeting in Kuala Lumpur in February 1995, groups from nine countries – including Indonesia - attended. In Europe, the solidarity movement put strong pressure on their governments to stop their export of arms to Indonesia, and were instrumental in the

organization of parliamentarians in support of self-determination for East Timor. The latter organization, formed in 1988, had at its peak a membership of 900 parliamentarians in 40 countries.

During the UN Commission of Human Rights session in February/March 1995, its Special Rapporteur on Summary, Arbitrary and Extra-Judicial Executions, who had visited East Timor in 1994, presented a detailed report on the Santa Cruz massacre and other violations, accusing Indonesian security forces of having acted with the intent to massacre civilians. The Commission reacted with a statement on the situation in East Timor with, in José Ramos Hortas’s words, ‘rather solid language.’

The above was the backdrop to the agreement in March 1995 between the Governments of Portugal and Indonesia, together with the office of the United Nations Secretary-General, to an All-Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogue, set to begin Austria in April. The plan was that thirteen Timorese from abroad would meet with another thirteen East Timorese from within East Timor. Bishop Belo was among those expected to take part in this UN-sponsored dialogue.

Suharto – an unwelcome visitor to Dresden

In an apparent move to win over European governments to the Indonesian view of the East Timor question, Indonesian President Suharto visited Germany in early April 1995. He attended a trade fair in Hanover on April 2, where a number of NGO’s held a parallel event to which young East Timorese living in Lisbon and pro-democracy activists in Jakarta were invited. Demonstrations were held, but security managed to keep them at a distance from the Indonesian president. The German visit, however, ended with a disaster when, as Suharto arrived in Dresden on 5 April, he was met with a noisy demonstration of some 150 people – among them a number of Indonesians and three young East Timorese who had been among those who entered the US embassy in Jakarta during the APEC meeting - beating drums and blowing whistles and calling for an Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor, the freeing of Xanana Gusmão and an act of self-determination. An infuriated Suharto called the protestors ‘insane.’ Suharto’s dinner was delayed, as the protestors forced his entourage to take another road, and a planned attendance at the Semper Opera House had to be abandoned since the orchestra refused to play for the dictator. The humiliation continued, as Dresden’s mayor refused to have Suharto sign the city’s official guestbook, and leaders from six parliamentary groups in Dresden signed a joint statement saying that Suharto was not welcome in the city.

It had been planned that Suharto then visit Weimar, as the last stop on his German trip, but this was also cancelled, as the mayor refused to receive him.

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110 Simpson, op. cit., p. 461.
112 Horta, op. cit., p. 2.
114 The Indonesian government made a formal request to the German foreign ministry that an Indonesian police team would be allowed to enter Germany in order to collect evidence against the Indonesian demonstrators, a request which was turned down as ‘unreasonable.’ The search for those who had planned the demonstrations also led to an increased harassments of pro-democracy NGOs in Indonesia. (‘Suharto retaliates against critics: Official reactions to demonstrations in Germany’ Human Rights Watch, Soeharto Retaliates Against Critics: Official Reactions to Demonstrations in Germany; 1 May 1995; Vol. 7, No. 6, accessed at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a71f40.html
An Intra-Timorese Dialogue in Austria, and an Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Lisbon

The All Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogue meeting was finally held between June 3-5 1995, in Burg Schlaining, a renovated 13th century castle south of Vienna, Austria, which housed the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution. Among the fourteen participants from outside Timor were José Ramos Horta, Constântio Pinto (the leading urban resistance figure who had been smuggled out of Timor after the Santa Cruz massacre, and now was CNRM’s representative in the US), Ines Almeida from CNRM, João Carrascalão, Vicente Guterres and Zacarias da Costa from UDT, Mari Alkatíri and José Luis Guterres from Fretilin, Abílio Araújo and José Martín (KOTA). Twelve from ‘inside’ East Timor participated, among them were the Governor, Abílio Osório Soares, Bishop Ximenes Belo, the ubiquitous ‘roving ambassador’ Francisco Lopes da Cruz, Mario Carrascalão (formerly of UDT, and also former Governor, currently ambassador to Romania) and Xavier do Amaral (Fretilin’s first president, now officially labelled leader of the Indonesia-Portugal Friendship Association) and Armindo Maia, rector of the Dili University.

The talks were restricted by the conditions Indonesia imposed when agreeing to the talks in the first place, namely that there must be no discussions regarding the legal status of East Timor. Even so, the final communiqué, ‘The Burg Schlaining Declaration’, reaffirmed the demands for human rights and the importance of the ongoing negotiations between the governments of Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the UN towards finding a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor according to the provisions of the UN General Assembly resolution 37/30 1982.

Directly after the talks in Austria, Bishop Belo travelled to the US; first to Washington where he informed a meeting of the International Policy Committee of the US Catholic Bishops about the situation in East Timor. He then went to New York, where he met with UN General Secretary Boutros Boutros Ghali and came away underwhelmed by the distanced reception that he received. It was quite obvious that the General-Secretary had very little interest in the question of East Timor. However, his successor at the highest office of the UN would soon be instrumental in placing Timor high on the UN agenda.

Coinciding in time with the Burg Schlaining talks – an obvious result of the increasingly efficient co-ordination between the many groups working towards an act of self-determination in East Timor – 110 parliamentarians from 37 different countries gathered in Lisbon for an Inter-Parliamentary-Conference on East Timor. The MPs came from all over Europe, from Latin America, from Australia and New Zealand and from all Portuguese speaking countries in Africa. The CNRM also insisted with the Portuguese that representatives from Tibet, Burma and Western Sahara be invited. At this conference, hosted by the Portuguese government between May 27 and June 2 1995, an agreement was made on a plan of action (the Lisbon Declaration) that included a visit to the imprisoned Xanana Gusmão by an ‘International Prominent Persons Group,’ that the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights 115 116

115 Pinto’s successor as leader of the urban resistance, Sabalae, was captured and killed on June 1, 1995, just a few days ahead of the Burg Schlaining meeting. Falintil’s leader, Konis Santana, then assumed leadership also of all clandestine activities (Naldo Rei, Resistance. A Childhood Fighting for East Timor. St. Lucia, Queensland: Queensland University Press, 2007, pp. 55 & 303.)


visit Dili, and that Indonesia comply with the numerous United Nations declarations on East Timor. The imprisoned Gusmão, by the way, was now “armed” with modern wizardry such as a lap-top computer and a mobile phone, thanks to Kirsty Sword and corrupt guards at Cipinang, making contacts with the outside world immeasurably easier and more efficient. As a physical person he may still have been kept in isolation, but was by no means isolated from anything regarding politics in relation to East Timor – or the possibility to exchange personal notes with Kirsty Sword, as their relation grew increasingly tender and amorous.

Presumably as a good-will gesture to the international community, Edi Sudrajat, Indonesia’s Minister of Security and Defence, announced at the end of June 1995, that ABRI would withdraw two battalions of troops from East Timor and replace them with local volunteers. 1200 civilians would be hired to serve as ‘people’s volunteers’ in Wanra (Perlawanan Rakyat, People’s Resistance) groups under the authority of the armed forces headquarters. There will be reason to return to Wanra and other organisations of ‘civilian volunteers’ later in this book.

The International Court of Justice – a verdict at the Hague

As mentioned above (cf. Ch.12), Portugal had in February 1991 instituted proceedings against Australia re Timor Gap at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). After four years of consideration, the ICJ announced its judgement on 30 June 1995. The ICJ stated that it could not rule on the lawfulness of the conduct of a State when its judgement would imply an evaluation of the lawfulness of the conduct of another State which is not a party to the case. Where this is so, the Court cannot act. The judgement requested by Portugal would demand a determination that Indonesia’s entry into and continued presence in East Timor is unlawful and that, as a consequence, it does not have the treaty-making power in matters relating to the continental shelf-resources of East Timor.

Indonesia’s rights and obligations would thus constitute the very subject-matter of such a judgement. Such a judgement would run directly counter to the Court’s Statute, which says that the Court can only exercise jurisdiction over a State with its consent.

In plainer language, the International Court of Justice could not rule on this matter because Indonesia does not accept its jurisdiction and is not a member state of the Court. If this was a disappointment to Portugal, as well as for the East Timorese resistance, there was some comfort to be found in that the ICJ also declared in its judgement that the Territory of East Timor remains a non-self-governing territory, and that its people have the right to self-determination.

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119 Horta, op. cit., p. 3. See also Östtimorinformation, No. 32/33, 1995.
120 Sword Gusmão, op. cit., pp. 120-125. Kirsty Sword had learnt that Subcomandante Marcos, the leader of the Mexican Zapatista movement regularly informed the world of his struggle through e-mails from his hideout in Chiapas. Colin Renwich, who was the source of this information, had also trained a number of young East Timorese activists in the art of using the Internet as means of communication (Ibid.)
Disturbances in Timor – September 1995

In early September 1995 there were disturbances across all of East Timor. The ignition came when an Indonesian prison official made a defamatory remark about the Catholic religion in Maliana prison on 2 September. The prisoners and wardens sent a petition to the Governor of East Timor asking for the man to be disciplined. When there was no reaction to the request, demonstrations took place in Maliana on 6 September, followed by clashes between the demonstrators and security officials. The next day, Indonesian-owned market stalls in Viqueque were attacked, followed by attacks on a protestant church (reflecting the perceived links between the church and the Indonesian military) and a mushola, a Muslim prayer house. Disturbances broke out in Dili on 8 September. Crowds of youth attacked Indonesian-owned shops and stalls and burnt vehicles. On 9 September they burnt down the capital’s biggest market at Comoro, where virtually all traders were Indonesian. Dozens of people were arrested.

There had been riots against the Indonesian presence before, but beside the larger scale there were three new elements to the September 1995 disturbances. For one, many of the targets were religious, as were many of the precipitating events. A lot of the newcomers targeted by the rioters, probably over one thousand, fled the territory, some saying they feared for their lives. There were also strong responses in the Indonesian media and from Muslim figures in Jakarta and other parts of the country.

One common theme was that the youngest province is like a spoilt child who needs to be treated more severely if he is ever to grow up. Amien Rais, leader of Indonesia’s 28 million strong Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah, angrily complained that Indonesia went to East Timor to provide milk but were given poison in return. Some Muslim organisations in Indonesia identified the Indonesian migrants in East Timor as a disadvantaged community despite their domination of business, the economy and holding most positions of influence in the administration, On 2 October, 80 ulamas went to the parliament calling for the government to step up its military presence in East Timor. There had also been student demonstrations in support of the East Timorese Muslims in several universities in Indonesia.

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said that the unrest had been engineered outside Indonesia. In this, Alatas formulated a view that many Indonesians shared, namely that Western support for the Catholics in East Timor was reflecting the same Western, Christian and Jewish enmity towards Islam which they saw as underlying the harassment and persecution of their co-religionists in Palestine and Bosnia, two places whose Muslim’s suffering had been a major theme in the Indonesian media during this period. Chechnya and the Southern Philippines were among the other places which had been highlighted in this context.

Perhaps reflecting – and as a counter to - a growing feeling in Indonesia that things were falling apart in East Timor, 13 former exiles of the Viqueque rebellion in 1959 (cf. Ch. 7) were on 10 November 1995 awarded veterans’ decorations in Jakarta by the Indonesian Defence Minister, ‘in recognition of their service in the struggle to integrate Timor Timur into Indonesia.’ On the same day in Viqueque East Timor’s Governor, Abílio José Osório Soares, laid the foundation stone for a monument in memorial of the uprising.

During this period in late 1995, the residents of Dili witnessed the erection on top of Fatumaca hill just east of the city of a large statue of Jesus, standing on top of a globe. From base to tip the whole thing measures 27 meters, second in size only to the one in Rio de

Janeiro. The statue, named *Cristo Rei*, Christ the King, was the brainchild of Governor Osório Soares, who had convinced Suharto that it would soothe fears in East Timor of a spread of Islam, and ease Timorese resentment against Muslim ‘newcomers.’ This construction was not only intended to appease Catholic believers. Its total height symbolised East Timor being Indonesia’s 27th province, and the figure of Jesus measured 17 meters, a reminder of the date July 17, 1976, when East Timor was formally included into the Republic of Indonesia. The planned date for the inauguration of Cristo Rei – July 17 1996, the twentieth anniversary of ‘Integration Day’ – came and went, and when it finally came, the event was to be overshadowed by circumstances which had originated in faraway Norway. More about that presently.

**The women make an inroad**

1975, the year of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, saw the rise of a global movement of women working against anti female legislation and conduct of states. The formal starting point was the UN-sponsored International Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City, which lasted for two weeks in July 1975. The conference in Mexico City was followed up in Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). East Timorese women activists saw these international developments as relevant to their own struggle, and challenged the almost exclusively all-male leadership of the resistance movement, who as a generalisation expected women to put the struggle for self-determination before gender considerations. At the Third UN World Conference on Women, in Nairobi in 1985, three Timorese women made a public appeal for support of their suffering people. The team of three Timorese women for Nairobi was Ines Almeida, Mimi Ferreira and Emilia Pires. They did not belong to a particular party, but rather reflected the (not yet predominant) tendency towards a national, rather than Fretilin/UDT, approach to find a solution to East Timor’s problems.

Ten years later, when the conference was held in Beijing, China, in early September 1995, (the same time as the riots in East Timor), Ines Almeida was once more part of a team that publicly campaigned for a free East Timor in this important women’s forum. The Timor contingency in Beijing was then made up of five women activists besides Ines Almeida; Ceu Brites, Odete Goncalves, Neca Brites, Milena Pires and Micas Soares, with the support of Kyoko Furusawa, of the fast-growing IFET, International Federation for East Timor.125 The Timorese women highlighted the suffering of Timorese women through the tragedy of Maria Gorete (cf. Ch. 11), whose case was presented as an example of the courage and determination of all Timorese women. In many ways, these women have been active participants in the resistance against the Indonesian illegal occupation, besides taking part in a development that globally has led to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the Rome Statute (1998), in which rape was defined as a war crime, eventually leading up to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, on Women, Peace and Security. This resolution was unanimously adopted by United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000, and marked the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women, and recognized the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building. It also stressed the importance of women’s equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security. SCR 1325 is binding upon all UN Member States and the adoption of the Resolution marked

125 By 1999 IFET was to have a membership of 36 East Timor support groups in 21 countries around the globe.
an important international political recognition that women and gender are relevant to international peace and security.\textsuperscript{126}

\textbf{Australia – against the tide}

While in many countries one could see a marked trend toward a more distanced stance vis-à-vis Suharto’s Indonesia (as witnessed by, for instance, the dictators less than friendly reception in Germany), Australia still seemed bent on creating closer ties with its northern neighbour. While there were geo-political reasonings behind this, the state-level wooing of Indonesia, i.e. Suharto’s Indonesia, was not always seen with keen eyes by the general public.

The major political row in Australia in 1995 was caused by the Indonesian appointment of retired Lieutenant-General Herman Mantiri as Ambassador to Canberra. Mantiri was once in charge of the Indonesian military region which includes East Timor, and had publicly defended the November 1991 massacre of East Timorese civilians in Dili. Protests in Australia eventually forced Indonesia’s withdrawal of Mantiri’s appointment.\textsuperscript{127}

Relations between the two countries were not made easier when a group of eighteen East Timorese ‘boat people’ arrived in Darwin on 1 June 1995, the first such group ever to arrive from across the waters of the heavily guarded Timor Sea.\textsuperscript{128} The Indonesian Government warned Australia that diplomatic ties would be harmed if they were granted refugee status. The Australian authorities turned to Portugal to find a solution to the problem, and found that in the eyes of the Portuguese Government the East Timorese are not Portuguese nationals, but are entitled to Portuguese nationality if they make a formal application. The Australian authorities decided that access to Portuguese citizenship was as good as possessing it and therefore the East Timorese should be disqualified from refugee status in Australia. The issue was made more complex by the fact that the Australian Government had four months earlier expressed the view to the International Court of Justice that Portugal had no rights or responsibilities in relation to the people of East Timor.\textsuperscript{129}

The year ended with the December 18, 1995 signing of the Canberra-Jakarta “Agreement on Maintaining Security” (AMS), by foreign ministers Gareth Evans and Ali Alatas, with Australian Prime Minister Keating and President Suharto watching, at a ceremony in Jakarta. The agreement built on the Indonesia-Australia Timor Gap Zone of Cooperation Treaty of 1991, which allowed Australian companies access to oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea. It consolidated trading links and reflected strengthened official and business ties, through the joint Forum of Economic Ministers, the Australia-Indonesia Business Council and the Australia-Indonesia Institute. Among other things, the Agreement formalized Indonesian access to military training in the Australian Defense Force (previously provided by the United States), which was partially discontinued in 1992 due to Congressional pressure on the issue of East Timor.\textsuperscript{130} Supporters heralded the agreement for strengthening Australia’s relationship


\textsuperscript{127} \textit{The West Australian}, August 25 1995.

\textsuperscript{128} One of the passengers on the boat was former TBOs (\textit{Tenaga Bantuan Operasi}, operations assistants, cf. Ch. 10) Alfredo Reinado, many years later (in 2008) ill-famed as a renegade soldier and would-be perpetrator of an assassination of José Ramos Horta. He was himself killed during the failed attempt (Jolliffe, op. cit., p. 162.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{The Weekend Australian} 14-15 October 1995.

\textsuperscript{130} As mentioned earlier, US Congress had in 1992 banned Indonesia’s International Military Education and Training (IMET) aid. In 1995 bill, the House of Representatives renewed the ban on IMET and tried to close a loophole under which Indonesia had been allowed to purchase some of the same training. The committee report accompanying the bill expressed "outrage" that the administration "despite its vocal embrace of human rights"
to its most powerful neighbor with beneficial effects for relations throughout the Asian region. Critics condemned wording in the AMS widely understood as obliging Australia to refrain from pressuring Indonesia on East Timor and other irredentist issues. Mr Keating said in response to harsh criticism to the agreement that ‘the only positive way Timor can be approached is in a relationship of this substance.’

According to Melbourne Bishop Hilton Deakin, by then a staunch supporter of the East Timor cause, spirits among the East Timorese in Australia in early 1996 were ‘at a low ebb’. Trust within the community had eroded, with members suspecting others of being Intel (Indonesian Intelligence) agents. Deakin has written that even the hitherto indefatigable José Ramos Horta seemed to be on the verge of giving up.

Civilian activism in Britain and Indonesia

In January 1996, four British women broke into the grounds of British Aerospace in Lancashire, with the aim of disarming newly built Hawk jets, due for delivery to the Indonesian government. Armed solely with household hammers, they did indeed mark one of the jets badly enough so as to be left in a condition where it could not be sent to Indonesia. This already spectacular action proved to be even more so, when all four were acquitted in court after basing their defence on international law.

And the entering into embassies by East Timorese youth clandestines in Jakarta continued. One observer suggested that this might even be proclaimed a national sport in a future independent East Timor …. Renetil had adopted two strategies in their struggle; one was to win over Impettu, the official government association of East Timorese students to their side, the other was to include Indonesian pro-democracy groups in the struggle. The first outward sign of the latter – and most successful - strategy coincided with the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1995.

This time, both East Timorese from Renetil and AST (Associação Socialista Timorense, the Timorese Socialist Association), and Indonesian youths from PRD (Partai Rakyat Demokratik, People’s democratic party) and SPRIM (Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia untuk Maubere, Indonesians in solidarity with the Maubere people) would take part in the action. Kirsty Sword Gusmão quotes one of the Indonesian partakers: ‘the

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133 Simpson, op. cit., p. 461.

134 Contrary to Renetil, AST had no wish to co-operate with Impettu, but sought instead confrontation with that group (Nicholson, op. cit., pp. 28-29.) AST was later renamed PST (Partido Socialista de Timor, the Socialist Party of Timor.)
Indonesian and East Timorese people are two boats with different destinations, but fighting the same band of pirates.\textsuperscript{135}

To Xanana Gusmão and others in the East Timorese resistance, it had become increasingly clear that a solution to East Timor’s problem could not be found outside a solution also to some of Indonesia’s problems – of which Timor was only a part. Thus, both Xanana in Cipinang and the clandestine youth had cultivated links with their pro-democracy counterparts from other parts of Indonesia; a few among those were also in jail with Xanana. The Dutch and Russian embassies were chosen for the 7 December action. In a well-coordinated operation, twenty-six East Timorese and twenty-nine Indonesians made it into the Dutch embassy, while around 15 Indonesians and 35 East Timorese managed to get past the security guards at the gates of the Russian embassy.

The following day, a pro-Indonesian demonstration was carried out by perhaps one hundred youth, mainly from Timor’s neighbouring islands in the Nusa Tenggara group. They jeered the ones inside the embassy, and also hurled rocks at them, in the proceedings also injuring the Dutch Ambassador and three of his staff. The protesters at the Russian embassy soon gave up, after pressure from the embassy staff as well as from Indonesian military; but the group at the Dutch embassy stayed for three days before surrendering. Some were taken away to be questioned, some escaped during the confusion of the situation. All in all, the action had been a great success from the viewpoint of the protesters; as world media had given the event great attention, it had for example been the lead story on BBC’s World Service on 7 December.\textsuperscript{136}

Following this culmination of ‘East Timor’s national sport’, the entering of embassies continued for some months more. Five East Timorese entered the New Zealand Embassy in Jakarta on 12 January 1996, and Indonesian police detained ten others outside the Japanese Embassy. Soon after, twelve East Timorese youth jumped into the Polish Embassy compound in Jakarta. From September 1995 to 21 February 1996 sixty-eight East Timorese had entered foreign embassies and (mostly) subsequently accepted refuge in Portugal. When a group of nine requested political asylum in Australia in February 1996, the Australian Embassy decided to add barbed wire to its fences. Formalities in this matter were now well-established; when a group of East Timorese sought asylum in the Dutch Embassy on the morning of 20 February 1996 they were on a plane to Portugal before the day was ended.\textsuperscript{137} However, when a group of East Timorese attempted to enter the German embassy, they were badly beaten by Indonesian security forces, who also seemed ready to open fire. Following this incident, a concerned Bishop Belo made a public appeal for an end to the increasingly dangerous actions, and they also decreased soon after.\textsuperscript{138} Though they did not disappear entirely, as we shall soon see.

\textsuperscript{135} Sword Gusmão, op. cit., p. 145.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, pp. 145-151.
\textsuperscript{137} The West Australian, 21 August 1996.
\textsuperscript{138} Kohen, op. cit., p. 258.
Geracão foun, the New generation

The new generation (geracão foun in Tetun) of independence activists were of course well aware of the danger – how could they not be? - but were also strongly committed to their struggle and prepared to face considerable risks. They differed from their older “mentors” in the resistance, be they in the bush or in exile, in that they had been educated in the Indonesian school and university system. There had been a massive increase in access to education in connection with the strong urbanisation from ca the mid-1980s. There had been 47 elementary schools in East Timor in 1976; in 1993 this had increased to 654. The number of high schools had during the same period increased from nil to 34, and the University of East Timor (UNTIM) had opened in 1986 with 2100 students, and by 1989 1500 students from East Timor were studying at universities in Indonesia.

The numbers are impressive, but the education system itself was often less so. In the words of Helen Hill, “the Indonesian education undoubtedly broke the mould of the old Portuguese-speaking elites and the concept that citizenship was for the civilizado only, it had its own version of elitism, racism, arrogance and hostility to East Timorese culture.” There were glaring and provocative absurdities built into this system, such as when East Timorese students learnt at school and in university courses about the struggle of the Indonesian people against Dutch colonialism and that the Indonesian constitution affirms the right of all people to independence. The dwi-fungsi of the Indonesian military also penetrated the university system via groups of university students with military training – Menwa (Resimen Mahasiswa, Student Regiments) – with the task of keeping a close watch on their fellow students. A Menwa unit with three hundred members existed at the University of East Timor.139

Helen Hill points out that the massive access to education, was at the same time an act of re-colonisation. Under the Portuguese, the brightest students were sent to university in Portugal (or Macau) and usually continued their careers somewhere in the Portuguese-speaking world. Under the Indonesians the brightest East Timorese were offered scholarships at the best universities in Indonesia and often offered jobs there. In both cases university education was not designed to assist in bringing about the development of East Timor but to attract the best brains to the metropolis.140

Even if they did come back to Timor after their studies, they were more often than not excluded from meaningful political and economic participation in the development of their territory, as many or most positions in administration and business were reserved for ‘newcomers’, many of whom showed little respect or understanding of local culture. Despite the enormous ethno-linguistic and socio-economic diversity among the East Timorese, the unity among young activists brought about by this idea of new generation was extremely strong. The unity was made all the stronger in the face of the favouritism shown to the newcomers.

The resentment among Timorese youths towards the Macassarese and Bugis who dominated the retail trade in Dili and other towns was especially harsh. Add to this the ever present threat of, and occasional outburst of, violence from the Indonesian military or its many auxiliaries, and it’s easy to see how ‘Timor Timur’ was a breeding ground for activities geared towards independence.

Even the much-flaunted (by the Indonesian authorities) pembangunan (development, cf. Ch. 11) was imbued by corruption and an obvious focus on warfare rather than on the welfare

of the population. Most development money was spent on administrative infrastructures, and especially those that were geared towards the needs of ABRI. From ca 1987 East Timor’s economy had grown by an annual rate of about 10% per year, and government expenditure on local programmes often extended those of other Indonesian provinces. Still, the imbalance between development and violence (explicit or implicit, but always a real threat) inflicted on the population was too grotesquely obvious for any hope that Jakarta would ever win ‘the hearts and minds’ of more than a tiny percentage of the population. Almost all activists had lost family members, or suffered physical violence or gross humiliations from the occupiers, even though many were born after the end of open warfare. The divisions within East Timorese society were perceived as too deep to be overcome by anything less than independence, and resulted in a feeling that only independence would end these deep divisions within East Timorese society. The geracão foun were prepared to face considerable risks in order to achieve this.141

Taking great risks often meant endangering the lives of one’s self or others, and Xanana Gusmão, as leader of the resistance and responsible for their overriding and long-term goals, at times found difficulty in controlling the young generation. As they had grown up under the brutal Indonesian rule and been educated in the Indonesian system they, on their part, found Xanana’s and others of his generation attachment to Portugal and things Portuguese more or less irrelevant and romantic. Feeling that they understood the realities of ‘Timor Timur’ better than the older generation, this sometimes “led to more independence on their part than Xanana was comfortable with.”142

Suharto – indications of willingness to compromise

In early 1996, Suharto made some moves that indicated a willingness to reach some kind of compromise. On March 14 he made an announcement after a meeting with Francisco Lopes da Cruz, who was about to leave for the second Austrian (Burg Schlining) meeting of the AIETD or All-Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue. The Indonesian newspaper Kompas, reported the following day that Suharto would be prepared to release Xanana, if the imprisoned resistance leader was willing to tell his fighters to come down from the mountains. Herb Feith, leading Australian expert on Indonesia, saw this as the fourth in a series of 1995-96 developments, which seemed to form links in a chain. They began with Jakarta’s acceptance of the UN proposal that there should be a meeting outside Indonesia of a representative group of East Timorese leaders in whose selection the UN Secretary-General would take a major role, i.e. the first Burg Schlining meeting.

The second in the series of developments was Suharto’s meeting with Abílio Araújo in January (and Abílio’s saying he was planning to meet Xanana on his next trip to Jakarta). The third was Suharto’s brief discussion with the Portuguese Prime Minister in February 1996, at the Bangkok meeting of Asian and European Heads of government which followed (or was accompanied by) a Portuguese offer to resume diplomatic relations with Indonesia if Xanana was released.143 A second All Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue was held in Austria in March


143 Letter from Herb Feith to Patsy Thatcher (and others), dated 31.3.96.
1996. Fourteen exiled representatives of the East Timorese Resistance and fifteen East Timorese living under Indonesian rule met. They were again restricted by the conditions Indonesia imposed when agreeing to the talks in the first place, namely that there must be no discussions regarding the legal status of East Timor.

In far-away Sweden, the Government quietly (during a newspaper strike) authorised the sale of three cannons to Indonesia in May 1996, as ‘follow up deliveries’ to previous sales. Three cannons may not seem much, but they form one link in a long chain of arms deliveries to Indonesia which goes back to 1977 (cf. Ch. 11), sometimes accompanied by half-hearted denouncements of Indonesia’s occupation of East Timor. Crocodiles of the crying variety are apparently not confined to tropical waters; rather, they are as ubiquitous as they are obnoxious.

In Indonesia, meanwhile, the New Order government under Suharto showed it’s growing inability to handle conflicts in Indonesian society, both within elite political circles and new social forces, when, on Saturday 27 July 1996, riots broke out in Jakarta. The riots, which resulted in a number of deaths and buildings and cars being burnt, followed a power struggle between two factions of the PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesia Democratic Party), one of which was led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of former President Sukarno. The Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) concluded that the riots were masterminded by a third party, namely the PRD (Partai Rakyat Demokratik, People’s Democratic Party). Hundreds of people were arrested and 124 of them eventually jailed. The PRD was outlawed, accused of being communists – which the party denied - and its leadership was arrested during the following months. Some sectors in the Indonesian community, on the other hand, concluded that the riots had been instigated by security forces in order to remove Megawati from the leadership of PDI, after her being openly critical of the Indonesian authorities. These events also resulted in Megawati being banned from competing in the 1997 election, when she and her faction instead supported the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party), the other approved opposition party. The Megawati faction of PDI in 1998 recast itself as PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle), and as leader of that party she will reappear later in this story.

The Nobel Peace Prize to Horta and Belo

Then, the situation again changed dramatically, when on October 11, 1996, it was announced that José Ramos Horta and Bishop Belo in tandem were to be awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize. This meant that the East Timor question again made headlines globally. The first time was after the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991, the second time was during the APEC summit in November 1994. In the words the Norwegian Nobel Committee:

In 1975, Indonesia took control of East Timor and systematically oppressed the people. In the years that followed it has been estimated that one-third of the population of East Timor lost their lives due to starvation, epidemics, war and terror. Carlos Belo, bishop of East Timor, has been the foremost representative of the people of East Timor. At the risk of his own life, he has

144 East Timorese women also attempted to break into the All Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogue, and succeeded, to a degree; during the period of talks the number of female participants increased from one to four. Not only the East Timorese resistance, but also the UN organisers showed little interest in letting the women in. Still women activists kept on bringing women’s issues up in resistance meetings from the mid-1990s onwards (Emily Roynestad, Are women included or excluded in post-conflict reconstruction? A case study from Timor Leste, Ottawa: United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (ADAW), 2003, pp. 3-4, accessed at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/peace2003/reports/Ep8Roynestad.PDF
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tried to protect his people from infringements by those in power. In his
efforts to create a just settlement based on his people’s right to self-
determination, he has been a constant spokesman for non-violence and
dialogue with the Indonesian authorities. In awarding this year’s Nobel Peace
Prize to Belo and Ramos Horta, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wants to
honour their sustained and self-sacrificing contributions for a small but
oppressed people.146

The Chairman of the Committee, Francis Sejerstad, also declared that “by awarding this prize,
we hope to contribute to a diplomatic solution to the conflict in East Timor.”147 When the
news of the prize came to Dili, Belo had to go to a previously arranged congress in Jakarta,
where he was met by angry demonstrators, purportedly acting in the name of the Youth of
East Timor. Only a handful of the demonstrators, however, were East Timorese, one of them
being a former leader of the ninjas.

Upon hearing the news from Jakarta, the real youth of Dili reacted by starting their own
demonstration. It turned out to be the biggest demonstration ever seen in Dili. It lasted for
three days, and on the second day students from outer areas arrived in trucks and buses. On
the fourth day the Bishop arrived back in Dili. He was met by the students at the cathedral
where they prayed together, and the Bishop promised to tell the world about the situation in
East Timor in his speech in Oslo.

In the midst of all this, Suharto arrived in Dili to attend a ceremony on October 15 to
dedicate the Cristo Rei statue to the East Timorese people, an event which had been arranged
well in advance of the news from Oslo. Bishop Belo shared a helicopter ride with Governor
Osorio Soares and Suharto circling the Jesus statue; presumably, however, their minds were
not wholly focused on the task at hand.

Indonesia reacted by letting their East Timorese roving ambassador Lopes da Cruz say to
the Portuguese newspaper Expresso, on 19 October 1996, that Indonesia was willing to
consider giving East Timor special status as a region with partial autonomy. A local
parliament would be invested with the power to handle questions of development, foreign
investments, and education, while Jakarta would continue to handle legislation, foreign policy
and questions of finance and defence. Ramos Horta’s negative reaction to this statement was
not a rejection of its details. Rather, he argued that discussions of autonomy could only be
held when East Timor’s continued status as Indonesia’s twenty-seventh province cease to be a
precondition for talks.

Because of Horta’s inclusion, Indonesia refused to attend a reception with Norwegian
royalty at the Nobel ceremony, and instead accused him of having incited unrest in East
Timor. Indonesia’s response to Belo was milder, even though he was criticized for telling the
German magazine Der Spiegel that the Indonesian occupiers treated the East Timorese as
“scabby dogs” and “slaves”. Belo later stated that he had been misquoted.148 In his acceptance
speech in Oslo, on December 10, 1996, Horta began with an introduction in Portuguese, in
Horta’s words “the language of Camões, Fernando Pessoa, Agostinho Neto, Jorge Amado and
Xanana Gusmão …the language that unites more than 200 million people in the five regions
of the world.”149

He praised “our spiritual leader, Dom Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo”, saying he was the real
winner, and expressed his gratitude to the solidarity movement, the Portuguese-speaking

146 Kohen, op. cit., pp. 262-263.
149 ETAN, Nobel Acceptance Speech by José Ramos-Horta. Accessed at
http://etan.org/news/news1/12jrhnobl.htm
African states, Portugal and Brazil and “the tens of thousands of Indonesians who died in their own struggle for freedom and democracy” and placed the conflict in East Timor in the context of the Cold War, “the might of States, the cynicism and indifference of too many and betrayal by some.” He also laid out in some detail the contents of CNRM’s peace plan and his vision of a future East Timor “at the cross-roads of three major cultures: Melanesian which binds us to our brothers and sisters of the South pacific region; Malay-Polynesian binding us to Southeast Asia, and the Latin Catholic influence, a legacy of almost 500 years of Portuguese colonisation.”150

Belo’s lecture was less political than Horta’s – he did not, for instance make any reference to a referendum - and he emphasized that “I firmly believe that I am here essentially as the voice of the voiceless people of East Timor … and what the people want is peace, an end to violence and the respect for their human rights.”

Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and José Ramos-Horta.

When Belo returned to Dili, as many as 200,000 people lined the streets in welcome. An Indonesian corporal attempted to assassinate the bishop during the procession, but was beaten to death by angry spectators. Not surprisingly, this led to severe repercussions in Dili by the Indonesian military.151

The growing international awareness of East Timor, in conjunction with the end of the Cold War, and Suharto’s Indonesia no longer being perceived of as a bulwark against world-communism, meant that East Timor was by now ‘a pebble in the shoe’ not only for Mr Ali Alatas. In the USA politicians as diverse as Bill Clinton and Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich by 1996/97 publicly called for an East Timor settlement.

The Jakarta riots in July 1996 and the announcement in October that the Nobel Peace prize was being awarded to Horta and Belo had put Indonesia in the pages of American newspapers and triggered the discussion of policy toward Indonesia. This was followed, also in October, by charges of illegal contributions to the Clinton presidential campaign from a Hong Kong

150 Ibid.
151 Nicholson, op. cit., p. 27.
and Jakarta-based conglomerate, the Lippo Group. The resulting “Indogate scandal” led to still more negative commentaries in the press, again with linkages to US foreign policy and the East Timor question.152 Another major actor, Japan, had already in 1995, partly as a result from the work of the many East Timor support groups, abandoned its staunch backing up of Indonesia, and now supported the UN process in search for a solution to the ‘East Timor question.’

A survey by The Far Eastern Economic Review in December 1996 showed that 64 per cent of Asian business executives, and 76 per cent of their Australian counterparts were of the opinion that Jakarta allow East Timor to secede from Indonesia. Also in December 1996, Muhammadiyah’s leader Amien Rais, said East Timor should be allowed to become independent if that was the wish of the people.153 Likewise, Indria Samego wrote in the Muslim newspaper Republika that

Rather than become the target of international criticism, why don’t we simply give the opportunity to the East Timorese society to determine their own future?154

It is worth noting that both Amien Rais and Indria Samego were members of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), whose chairman at the time was B. J. Habibie, a name we shall soon encounter again.

Kofi Annan, as new Secretary-General of the UN, brings a new focus on East Timor.

Kofi Annan being installed as Secretary-General of the United Nations on 1 January 1997, was still one more factor in the East Timor question gaining more recognition. From this period, East Timor was at the forefront at the UN in a way it had never been before.155 Annan appointed Pakistani diplomat Jamsheed Marker as his Special Representative (SRSG) for East Timor, and two officers from the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Francesc Vendrell and Tamrat Samuel, were assigned to work with him. Both were experienced East Timor hands, having organized the two All-Inclusive Intra-Timorese Dialogues (AIETD) in 1995 and 1996.

Encouraged by the recent developments – The Nobel Peace prize accorded to Ramos Horta and Belo, and Kofi Annan appointed UN Secretary-General – Professor Barbedo Magalhães of Oporto University organized a series of symposia at universities in the United States and

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153 The Australian 11 December 1996
154 Crouch, op. cit., p. 154.
155 Coinciding in time with the appointment of Kofi Annan as Secretary-General of the UN, and adding yet one more link between the international arena and the resistance in East Timor and Indonesia; Juan and Céu Lopes Federer in early 1997 established the East Timor International Support Center (ETISC) in Darwin, Northern Territory. Funded mainly from Europe, ETISC developed relationships not only with the East Timorese resistance, but also with Indonesian pro-democracy groups. ETISC supported activities by the student organizations Renetil and Impettu, and established a training centre in Jakarta which gave classes in English, Portuguese and computer skills, and also served as a clandestine meeting place (Jude Conway (ed.) Step by Step: Women of East Timor. Stories of Resistance and Survival. Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2010, pp. 6-8).
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Canada in early 1997.\textsuperscript{156} The goal was to spread knowledge about the general situation in East Timor and Indonesia, and to raise the commitment toward finding a solution in accordance with International law. A number of academics, politicians and activists were invited to join in; such as Bishop Hilton Deakin and activist Juan Federer from Australia, the Indonesian sociologist and writer George Aditjondro, Fretilin’s Mari Alkatiri and José Carrascalão of UDT, Kastorius Singa, representing Indonesian NGOs working in East Timor, Armando Maia and Arlindo Marcal from inside East Timor, Liem Soei Liong, the editor of \textit{TAPOL}, Constancio Pinto, and the drawcard, recent Nobel Peace Prize laureate José Ramos Horta. Between February 22 and March 8, a straining tour schedule took participants to universities in New York, New Jersey, Boston, Cincinnati, Washington, Providence, Dartmouth, New Haven, Baltimore, San Francisco, Berkeley and Vancouver. ETAN organized for members of the team to meet with US lawmakers and Church leaders, and at the end of the tour José Ramos Horta met with Kofi Annan and his Special Representative for East Timor, Jamsheed Marker.\textsuperscript{157}

It was after this meeting that Marker, in March 1997, set out on a journey to ascertain the views of all parties involved, and present to them the renewed policy of UN involvement. The first stop was Lisbon, where he met with the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as East Timorese exiles and representatives of a number of NGOs. He continued to Jakarta, for meetings with Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and President Suharto, who stated that the integration of East Timor with Indonesia was not negotiable. However, Suharto still welcomed the Secretary-General’s initiative, since there was a view in Portugal and elsewhere that the right of self-determination had not been exercised in East Timor. During a brief lunch meeting with Major-General Prabowo Subianto, Marker stressed the importance that he meet Xanana Gusmão, which was also arranged. When the two met in the Cipinang prison, Gusmão emphasized that he was ready for a dialogue without pre-condition. Gusmão concluded that the meeting signaled a commitment on part of the UN to directly involve the Timorese resistance into the talks, unlike earlier UN-arranged talks, which had been limited to discussions between representatives of Portugal and Indonesia.\textsuperscript{158}

Marker then had a meeting in Denpasar, Bali with General Rivai, commander of the KODAM IX/Udayana military region, which included the territory of East Timor (in military language KOREM 164.) On 22 March he arrived in Dili, for meetings with spokesmen for TNI (\textit{Tentara Nasional Indonesia}, since 1999 the new name for the Indonesian national military, replacing ABRI.) He also met with Abílio Osório, the Governor of East Timor, the two bishops, Belo and Nascimento, and representatives of various East Timorese parties and groups. Most seemed to have a great faith in the UN, and most wanted independence, while a few spoke in favour of integration. Marker noted that the latter’s appearances were “sleek, smug and assured,” in stark contrast to the pro-independence representatives, who were “shabbily dressed and carrying gaunt looks and expressions of desperate hopes in their eyes.”\textsuperscript{159}

Jamsheed Marker’s diplomatic tour bore fruit a couple of months later when, on June 19 and 20, 1997, Kofi Annan and Marker had meetings at the UN in New York with the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal, Ali Alatas and Jaime Gama, both accompanied by high-level delegations. The one thing both sides had in common was, according to Marker, “a

\textsuperscript{156} Funding was provided by the Portuguese Universities Foundation, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) created by the Council of Rectors of the Public Portuguese Universities.


\textsuperscript{158} Marker, op. cit., pp. 24-36. \textit{See also} Sword Gusmão, op. cit., p. 177.

\textsuperscript{159} Marker, op. cit., p. 43.
profund and surly distrust of each other.”160 While Alatas was prepared to discuss any aspect of the East Timor question, as long as the two sides agreed in advance that any final settlement would be based on “autonomy,” Gama stated that the right to decide on the final status of East Timor belonged to the East Timorese, and the East Timorese only. While strongly disagreeing on this basic question, the two sides agreed on the format of continuing talks, and to avoid, at least for the time being, discussions on any agreement that would lead to either an ‘interim’ or a ‘final’ settlement of the issue.161

David Alex dies.

In late June 1997, David Alex, a legendary leader of the guerrilla resistance movement, died under mysterious circumstances. He was quickly buried in a cemetery in Dili, and the authorities did not allow his family to see the body. Renowned as a one of the most effective guerrilla leaders, he had been captured the day before in Baucau, after troops under his command had performed a number of ambushes, inflicting heavy casualties among Indonesian soldiers and police. David Alex was transported by helicopter to Dili where he was interrogated. Indonesian authorities claimed that he died from loss of blood despite efforts to save him, while the resistance claimed that he had been tortured to death.162 He was succeeded as operational commander by Taur Matan Ruak.

Xanana Gusmão meets Mandela.

On the afternoon of 15 July 1997 Xanana Gusmão, as he was getting ready for a game of football against another cellblock, was called to the guard post of his cell block, where the chief of Cipinang prison and an official from Deplo (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) waited for him. To Gusmão’s amazement they asked him whether he would like to meet with Nelson Mandela. Together with three guards he was then taken in a limousine to the Presidential palace compound, and escorted to a room in the state guesthouse where Mandela and Francisco Lopes da Cruz (the former UDT leader who now served as Indonesia’s roving ambassador for East Timor) waited. Dinner was served, and while eating Mandela and Gusmão discussed the political situation re East Timor.

Mandela explained that he had already brought up the question with Suharto, explaining to the president that to do otherwise would have been impossible, as a number of human rights organizations had demanded this and expected this from him. At first Suharto turned down Mandela’s request to see Gusmão, but later changed his mind. Mandela told Gusmão that “Suharto and you are good people who have within your capacity to come to an understanding”, and asked Gusmão to consider the possibility of autonomy and a dialogue with the Indonesian government. Gusmão explained that he had always been ready for a dialogue, but that he was not sure if he could take the autonomy proposal seriously, as Suharto himself had rejected this idea on many occasions. He then told Mandela about the CNRM peace plan – which called for talks without pre-conditions - and Mandela reminded him that in the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa, it had been crucial to find a solution whereby the regime would not lose face in the process. Xanana Gusmão informed Mandela that the

160 Ibid, p. 46.
161 Ibid, p. 49.
CNRM plan included such ‘face-saving’ provisions, that no solution was possible outside the context of the United Nations, and that Portugal was still recognized by the UN as administrative power of East Timor, and thus had to be included in any process towards achieving peace. After dinner, Mandela’s and Gusmão’s ways parted; Gusmão was brisked back to Cipinang, where the night guards now treated him as a celebrity, and Mandela flew to South Africa, where he soon after wrote a letter to Suharto asking for the release of Gusmão, and also made public his opinion on the matter.163

More rounds of negotiations in New York and Austria

At the next Senior Officials meeting at the UN in New York, August 4-7 1997, Jamsheed Marker presented to the Indonesian and Portuguese delegations papers that outlined the main features in a number of previous cases, including those of Bhutan and India, Catalonia and Spain, the Aaland islands and Finland, and lessons that could be drawn from them. Ahead of, and during this meeting, Marker noted the direct influence that happenings ‘on the ground,’ such as the death of David Alex and Mandela’s public statement that Xanana Gusmão should be released, had on the two delegations in New York. The rumours of torture and summary execution surrounding David Alex’s death “added substantial darkening to the clouds that foregathered prior to our meeting”, while Mandela’s statement “left the Portuguese and Indonesian delegations, each for their own separate reasons, in a state of some confusion and barely concealed irritation.”164

In early October 1997, the next session of talks between senior Portuguese and Indonesian officials in New York was troubled from the start. Portugal had refused entry visa to an Indonesian delegate to an international forum for child welfare in Lisbon, and six East Timorese students had jumped the gates to the Austrian Embassy in Jakarta and sought sanctuary there. As two of them were accused of possession of illegal explosives, in relation to an earlier incident in Jakarta, they were all refused safe passage out of Indonesia. As a consequence, they were stuck in the embassy for months, while at the same time adding their ‘ghostly presence’ to the talks at the UN. While such incidents clearly constituted lesser or greater irritations within the talks, the major – and glaring - difference between the two parties was still whether they viewed the autonomy proposal as representing to them a solution in itself, or whether it represented a possibility of arranging a later referendum on the future status of the territory.165

Later in the same month there was a third session of the All Inclusive East Timor Dialogue (AIETD), held at the Krumbach Castle in Austria from 20 to 23 October, 1997. There were 35 participants in all, with 19 coming from Indonesia and East Timor and16 from the East Timorese diaspora. The delegates included Bishop Belo, Lopez da Cruz, José Ramos Horta, João Carrascalão, Mari Alkatiri and Abílio Osório Soares. Also present was Jamsheed Marker, the Special Representative of the Secretary General. As during earlier AIETD meetings, any future political status was not discussed – nor were the East Timorese trapped at the Austrian Embassy - , but the participants agreed in the end to a Declaration by consensus. It spelled out (among other things) the delegates’ interest in finding concrete and practical ideas leading to confidence-building measures, and to strengthen the dialogue

163 Sword Gusmão, pp. 177-187.
164 Ibid, p. 52.
165 Ibid.
between Timorese in Timor and those in diaspora, by arranging two-way visits between their respective ‘brothers and sisters’ in East Timor and in exile.166

**Indonesia’s economy in crisis**

During the latter half of the 1990s, it became increasingly clear that East Timor was indeed the ‘pebble in the shoe’ of Indonesian foreign policy that the Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas once spoke of.167 It seemed, however, that as long as the Suharto administration was in charge in Jakarta, the situation was a deadlock. This deadlock came to an end when, after a devastating economic crisis in Asia in 1997, demonstrations with cries for *reformasi* (reforms) occurred all over Indonesia. As these popular demonstrations intensified, CNRM flags were often seen among the demonstrators. On many occasions, pro-democracy and East Timor independence groups co-operated closely towards the common goal of throwing down the Indonesian dictatorship.168

During Suharto’s three decades in power, Indonesia’s economy had grown by an average of 7 percent annually, and living standards had risen substantially for the majority of Indonesians. However, relatively small urban elites and military circles had always received more than others of the benefits of modernization and development, and none less so than Suharto and his family and close cronies, who had assumed control of key sectors of the economy and amassed enormous fortunes by means of monopolies and lucrative trade arrangements.169 The Suharto family’s holdings in East Timor included over half a million hectares of land, marble deposits, control over coffee production and export, a textile company, PT Dilitex, and a drinking water company, Aquamor. In these businesses friends of the family, such as Bob Hasan, and Suharto’s daughters Siti Hediati Haryadi (married to Prabowo Subianto) and Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana were involved in a complex net of ownership, together with local cronies such as Jakarta-appointed (in September 1992) Governor José Abílio Osório Soares, a protégé of Prabowo’s. Three onshore oil-wells, discovered in the 1960’s, were also included in the family holdings, as was a Perth based company, Genindo Western Petroleum Propriety Limited, headed by Bambang Trihatmodjo, Suharto’s middle son, that was set up to venture into Timor Sea offshore prospecting.

These Suharto interests were closely intertwined with the business interests of other Indonesian generals, such as those of the earlier mentioned (cf Ch. 11) Batara Indra, a conglomerate backed by Benny Murdani and Dading Kalbuadi. Most of the hotels and the only cinema in Dili were by the 1990’s owned by Batara Indra. Batara Indra was by then also involved in all major infrastructure projects, together with the Anak Liambau Group of Governor Osório Soares.170

By the 1990s the unrestrained corruption and favouritism of his regime had begun to alienate even the middle class and business circles, but continuing high rates of economic growth and the government’s tight political controls insulated Suharto from any genuine opposition. In 1997, however, Indonesia became caught up in a monetary crisis sweeping across Southeast Asia. The value of the Indonesian national currency, the rupiah, plummeted,

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167 *The Pebble in the Shoe. The Diplomatic Struggle for East Timor* (Jakarta: Aksara Karunia 2006) is also the title of Mr. Alatas book, where he gives his version of many events related in the present text.

168 *Naipospos, op. cit., pp. 87-90*

169 In 2004, Transparency International (TI), a Germany-based non-profit organization that monitors worldwide cases of corrupt governing and business practices, named Suharto the world's most corrupt political figure "of all time."

and the resulting financial crisis exposed deep flaws in the national economy. To overcome the immediate and long-term effects of the crisis, the Indonesian government and the International Monetary Fund reached a series of agreements in which Indonesia was to implement a number of structural reforms in exchange for emergency funding of the Indonesian economy. The first agreement with the Fund, on October 31, 1997, called for the closure of sixteen banks. This indeed happened, but two – owned by Suharto family members – reopened within a few days. Re other steps called for in the agreement, nothing eventuated. In November, Suharto attended an APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Consultation) meeting in Vancouver, Canada. Ahead of this summit, exiled East Timorese and Indonesians had toured the country and called on the authorities to ‘bar Suharto or put him behind bars’, and several thousand Canadians turned up to protest against Suharto during the APEC meeting. Then, in December 1997, Suharto declined to attend an ASEAN presidents’ summit, due to suffering a minor stroke. In the words of Bresnan, “Suharto in late 1997 and early 1998 gave every appearance of being an elderly sick man, preoccupied with the financial interests of his children”

Marker returns to Jakarta and Dili

In December 1997, Jamsheed Marker, now accompanied by Tamrat Samuel, returned to Indonesia and East Timor. The journey followed the previous format, with talks in Jakarta, a stop-over at the Udayana military command in Bali, and meetings in Dili with the two bishops and representatives of pro-integration and pro-independence groups. But some things were dissimilar to the previous trip. For one thing, the atmosphere in Jakarta was notably different: The confident euphoria that had pervaded the capital during the earlier visit had by now considerably dissipated, to be replaced by a sense of disquiet and feelings of apprehension at the ominous approach of the dark cloud of nemesis …. 174

And then, during a meeting with opposition leader Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as Gus Dur, Wahid astonished Marker and Vendrell by casually saying “… if they truly want independence, why not? Why should we stop them?” In Bali, on the other hand, the new Udayana commander, General Damiri, frankly stated that the situation in Timor needed ‘firm action.’ In Dili they then met, among others, Manuel Viégas Carrascalão, brother of Mário, the former governor of Timor Timur. Manuel Carrascalão, a retired member of the East Timor parliament and a former supporter of integration, had recently changed sides and had founded GRPRTT (Gerakan Rekonsiliasi dan Persuatan Rakyat Timor Timur, the Movement for

173 Ibid, p. 37. One such financial interest was PT Timor Putra Nasional (Timor, National Son), a company headed by Suharto’s son Hutomo “Tommy” Mandala Putra which imported Kia cars from South Korea and sold them under the name Timor in Indonesia; a name supposed to give positive associations to the country’s 27th province. The company enjoyed exemptions from taxes and duties which were imposed upon its less fortunate competitors, such as Toyota. As a result, the Timor cars sold at a considerably lower price than comparable products from other companies.
174 Marker, op. cit. p. 67.
175 Ibid, p. 113.
Reconciliation and Unity of the people of East Timor) together with a small number of other prominent East Timorese. Their aim was to find a solution to the problems of East Timor through dialogue, and eventual self-determination, as “the path of integration had been closed by injustice.”

Back in Jakarta, Marker again met Prabowo Subianto, who said that the TNI was prepared to make a number of concessions, including the withdrawal of military forces and the release of all political prisoners, provided that ‘a special autonomy status’ for Timur Timor was accepted by the Portuguese. Marker then visited Xanana Gusmão in Cipinang prison. Gusmão stressed, as he had done during his meeting with Mandela, that he in no way wanted to cause the Indonesian military to lose face. He also told Marker that he was prepared to accept exile in South Africa, if such an offer was extended by the UN.

**Konis Santana dies**

Konis Santana, vice commander of Falintil (Xanana Gusmão being the supreme commander), died on 11 March 1998. It was first announced by the resistance that he had been fatally injured from a fall in the central and mountainous Ainaro area. He had, however, suffered from bad health for a lengthy period of time – as confirmed by Jill Jolliffe already four years earlier- and finally died from a heart attack at Mirtutu in the eastern Lete Fohu area part of the country. A couple of months earlier, a satellite phone had been smuggled in to Santana, and contacts on a weekly basis had been established between him in the East Timor bush and Gusmão in Cipinang jail. Santana and others were thus well informed about the downfall in Indonesian economics, and its effect on politics in the country at the time, and Kirsty Sword Gusmão had only two days before his death had a conversation with Santana.

The story about the deadly accident may have been a smoke-screen to avert the Indonesian military from finding out about his whereabouts at the time of death, and thereby also of course those of his supporters and soldiers. Santana was replaced as vice commander by Taur Matan Ruak, who also functioned as commander of Region II (Baucau, Manattuto and Dili). Lere Anana Timor was the commander of Region I (Los Palos and Viqueque in the east), while Falur Rate Laek commanded Region III (Same, Ainaro and Suai). Ular, finally, was commander of Region IV, covering Liquica, Ermera, Bobonaro, Suai and Oecusse. In his position as leader of the clandestine organization FPI, Konis Santana was replaced by Francisco Guterres, Lu-Olu, who since 1988 had served as secretary of the CDF (*Comissão Diretiva da Fretilin*, Directive Commission of Fretilin), the highest Fretilin organ inside East Timor.

**CNRT is established – and women struggle for inclusion**

An East Timorese National Convention in the Diaspora, with an attendance of 200 delegates, was held at Peniche, Portugal in April, 1998. At the convention, which was greatly assisted by the Portuguese government, CNRM restyled itself as CNRT (*Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorense*, National Council of Timorese Resistance), to be more palatable to some within UDT who detested the ‘M-word’, Maubere, the rough equivalent of ‘common
man’ which they considered to have leftist connotations. A group of widely respected persons, the Macau-based lawyer Manuel Tilman and three Catholic priests, Father Francisco Fernandez, Father Domingos Maubere and Father Filomeno Jacob, were authorized by Xanana Gusmão to go to Portugal and assist (and in some instances perhaps convince) Ramos Horta. Fretilin and UDT to bring about this change. In line with this more inclusive policy, the OPMT became OMT (Organização da Mulher Timorense, Organisation of Timorese Women), open to women of all political parties. This was a successful move. Many women (and men) were fed up with the party strife between Fretilin and UDT, and the OMT – just like the CNRT – were more widely acceptable to East Timorese men and women than the preceding organisations.\footnote{Cristalis & Scott, op. cit., p. 47. As a direct result of the establishing of CNRT, recruitment for the Maliana-based militia Dadurus Merah Putih (Red and White Typhoon) began in May 1998, and within months this example would be followed across the whole territory of East Timor (Peter Bartu, ‘The Militia, the Military, and the People of Bobonaro District’. In Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Vol. 32, Nos. 1 and 2. Cedar Michigan: BCAS, 2000, p. 37.)}

Xanana Gusmão was elected President of CNRT with José Ramos Horta and Mário Carrascalão as Vice-Presidents. Other key convention outcomes were the appointment of an eight member leadership group, CPN (Conselho Político Nacional, National Political Council) - Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos Horta, João Carrascalão, Father Francisco Fernandes, Mari Alkatiri, Ana Pessoa, Alberto Araújo, Domingos Oliveira\footnote{To this group of eight were later added another four members: Estanislaus da Silva, Agio Pereira, Vicente Guterres and Zacarias Costa. (Ben Kiernan, Genocide and Resistance in Southeast Asia. Documentation, Denial & Justice in Cambodia & East Timor. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009, p. 180.)} – and the appointment of twelve CNRT representatives inside East Timor - David Ximenes (CNRT Vice-President inside East Timor), Taur Matan Ruak, Abel da Costa Belo, João Fernandes Alves, Leão dos Reis Amaral, Lucas da Costa, Paulo Freitas da Silva, Francisco Lopes de Carvalho, Leandro Isaac, Lu Olu, and Manuel Viegas Carrascalão.\footnote{Pat Walsh, From opposition to proposition: The National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) in transition, ACFOA, Melbourne, 8 November 1999.} The CEL/FC (Comité Executivo da Luta/Frente Clandestina, the Executive Committee of Struggle/Clandestine Front), was now reorganized into FPI (Frente Political Internal, the Internal Political Front), still under the leadership of Konis Santana, following the death of Sabalae.

A group of East Timorese women activists from both Fretilin and the UDT proposed that women be involved on the decision making level at the convention. But, in the words of Ines Almeida, one of this group: “It did not give the women’s proposal due respect and consideration … and the way the male political elite organised the meeting ensured that women did not have a say.”\footnote{Cristalis & Scott, op. cit., p. 56.} Even so, the convention adopted a ‘Magna Carta’ on freedoms, rights and duties, later to serve as a formative document for the constitution of an independent East Timor. In this Magna Carta, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was included; it also embraced maternity and widow’s rights and repudiated all forms of discrimination.

Externally, the Timorese Resistance as a whole was led by a majority of men, even if women had made some inroads. Milena Pires was elected Vice President of UDT, and Fatima Cruz, Isabel Vidigal, Esmeria Araújo and Aurea Valadares were elected to the Supreme Political Council of UDT in 1993. Ana Pinto was elected member of the Central Council of the Fretilin External Delegation, Filomena de Almeida, Marina Ribeiro and Madalena Boavida were elected to head the Economy and Information and Culture Sectors of the Fretilin External Delegation in 1994.\footnote{Milena Pires & Catherine Scott, ‘East Timorese Women: The Feminine Face of Resistance’. In Torben Retbøll, (ed.) East Timor: Occupation and Resistance. Copenhagen: IWGIA (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1998, pp. 147-151.}
The renamed OMT was by now not the only East Timorese women’s organisation. In the second half of the 1990s, a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were founded in Dili, such as the Fokupers (Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Lorosae, East Timorese Women’s Communications Forum), Gertak, the East Timorese Movement Against Violence Towards Women and Children, and GFFTL (Grupo Feto Foinsae Timor Lorosae, East Timor Student Women’s Group). The founders often had a background in the resistance or the OPMT/OMT. All these new organisations focused on violence against women; not only the violence of the occupying army, but also domestic violence within families.184

Suharto resigns

In January 1998, Suharto presented a budget for 1998-1999 that the markets viewed as unrealistic; the currency fell to a record low, resulting in demonstrations, riots and bombnings in Java. As public unrest spread to other islands, there were also worries that the regional crisis would spread to other parts of the globe. At this time, US President Clinton made a number of phone calls to Suharto, urging him to implement the IMF agreement, as did other heads of government. Under pressure, Suharto also signed a more explicit agreement with the IMF, but again showed little wish or strength to implement its content. When Suharto announced in February that he would once more run for the presidency in the upcoming elections, the rupiah again fell to an all-time low, as did Suharto’s reputation, both inside Indonesia and abroad.185

Anti-government demonstrations turned into rioting, resulting in large-scale destruction and a great number of deaths, in Jakarta and other cities in May 1998, after the shooting of six students at Trisakti University in Jakarta. Suharto had by then lost the support of both the military (the special forces, Kopassus, were in fact accused by many of having instigated at least some of the riots) and the US, and on May 20, US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright called upon Suharto to resign and provide for a democratic transition.186 This he did, on May 21. He was succeeded in office by the vice president (since March 1998), B.J. Habibie, a former Minister of Research and Technology and – it goes without saying - a long-standing Suharto crony. Crony or not, this opened the way for a more flexible approach to the problem of East Timor.187

The fall of Saigon to Communist forces in 1975 was perhaps the main decisive factor behind the realpolitikal game which enabled Indonesia to invade East Timor with the quiet compliance of the powers that could have prevented the tragedy. Quite logically, the most important factor behind the international community’s actions in regards to the East Timor in the late 1990s was unquestionably the end of Communism as a global threat from 1989 onwards. With Communism gone, the rationale behind supporting dictators like Suharto was gone. Still, it was the economic collapse of the tiger economies of Asia which was the immediate factor behind the extraordinary events that followed. Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea and Japan all suffered from the crash, but none was hit harder than Indonesia. With economic collapse, political balance changed, and countries that had supported Indonesia over East Timor no longer found it to be to their advantage to do so.188

184 Cristalis & Scott, op. cit., p. 48.
186 Noam Chomsky, op. cit., p. 140.
187 The events in May 1998, in tandem with a complex power struggle within the TNI, also resulted in Prabowo Subianto’s discharge from military service and subsequent voluntary exile in Jordan.
An unfurling of Indonesian political resistance

It was clearly a time for change. Only a few days after the instalment of Habibie as president of Indonesia, his Minister of Justice stated that it was time to make East Timor a ‘special region’, a suggestion which Habibie immediately repudiated. Still, the wheels had been set in motion, and in June 1998, events unfolded at a fast pace:

- On June 1 two East Timorese and three Indonesian students began a hunger strike in Jakarta, demanding the release of all political prisoners, while students at the University of East Timor held a free speech forum, discussing a wide range of topics, such as the right of self-determination and an end to collusion, corruption, and nepotism in the provincial government.
- On June 4 a helicopter crash near Viqueque killed 12 Indonesian military personnel, including virtually all senior personnel responsible for military activity in East Timor.
- On June 6, a public meeting to discuss the future of East Timor was held in Dili. With ca. 3000 people in attendance, including Indonesian appointed Governor Abílio Soares and former Governor Mario Carrascalão. Soares attempted to steer the meeting toward the question of autonomy, but he was answered by angry jeers and the unfurling of banners stating demands for self-determination. The Indonesian armed forces did not interfere with events.
- 9 June. Habibie unexpectedly (even, as it seems, to his own Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas) in an interview with BBC announced casually – and thereby contradicting his own statement only a week before - that he was ready to give East Timor special status, like Aceh, Jakarta and Yogyakarta.
- On June 10, some 3000 students gathered at the University of East Timor holding a free speech forum. Besides carrying banners and demanding the release of Xanana Gusmão, they also called for dialogue to be held gathering all Timorese groups both in East Timor and abroad. Many university teachers were also present. The students had planned to take the mass march onto the streets of Dili, but stayed on campus after Bishop Belo asked them to abandon these plans due to fears of violent reaction from Indonesian armed forces.
- On June 12, a large number of East Timorese students occupied the Indonesian Foreign Ministry grounds in Jakarta for over eight hours in peaceful demonstration. They sought a meeting with Foreign Minister Ali Alatas to discuss their demands for a referendum in East Timor. Hundreds of Indonesian troops stormed the gathering and violently broke it up, an indication that the new regime was still prepared to crack down on East Timorese.
- June 13. Following the Jakarta action, hundreds of students again gathered at the University of East Timor to call for a referendum and the release of Xanana Gusmão. On June 13, an indefinite vigil was launched outside the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, calling for the release of Xanana Gusmão.
- On June 15, a delegation from the newly formed DSMTT (Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa Timor Timur, Student Solidarity Council of East Timor), presented a statement to the provincial legislature and Bishop of Dili, in which they rejected Habibie’s offer of special status and demanded that a UN-supervised referendum on East Timor’s future political status be held.
- 16 June. A 21 year old East Timorese man, Herman Soares, was killed near Manatuto by an Indonesian soldier as he cleared wood from the roadside. The Indonesian military took the extraordinary action of apologising for the killing, but thousands of
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East Timorese immediately took to the streets of Dili in angry protest at the killing and demand a proper investigation.

- 17 June. Around 10,000 people marched through the streets of Dili in a peaceful procession for the burial of Herman Soares. They marched past the Governor’s house and on to the provincial legislature, before returning to a ceremony at the young man’s home, and then after that moving on to Santa Cruz cemetery. No violence from the military was reported. Hundreds also protested in Manatuto and Baucau. On the same day in Jakarta, hundreds of East Timorese students marched to the Indonesian Justice Ministry to demand the release of all East Timorese political prisoners. The action again passed without incident.

- On June 20, some 2000 students in Dili marched from the University of East Timor to the regional legislative building, where they met legislative officers and demanded a referendum. In Becora prison East Timorese political prisoners broke through the front door of the prison and occupied the forecourt of the building with all their belongings. They unfurled all their banners and flags (including the Falintil and national flag) demanding the right to self-determination and the release of all political prisoners. Indonesian troops arrived and negotiated via priests for the prisoners to return to the prison. Apparently in an attempt to quieten the situation, various East Timorese leaders such as Bishop Belo and former governor Mario Carrascalão declared that an immediate referendum was not a good idea, as did Xanana Gusmão in his cell at Cipinang. José Ramos Horta did the same at the UN. They variously suggested that a referendum be held after a transition period of from ‘two, three, four, five years’ (Horta), ‘five to ten years’ (Gusmão) and ten to fifteen years’ (Belo).189

- 24 June. Bishop Belo flew to Jakarta for a two-hour discussion with President Habibie. He said afterwards that a referendum or other core demands by students was not discussed, with talks exploring potential common ground rather than focussing on differences. President Habibie, however, said to Belo that he would soon reduce the number of troops in East Timor.190

Marker again returns to Jakarta and East Timor

Jamsheed Marker again visited Indonesia and East Timor 16-22 July, 1998. Xanana Gusmão then presented Marker with what was basically the CNRM peace plan from 1992, a ‘phased approach’ with an initial security phase of six to eighteen months, during which there would be a lowering of tensions, a reduction of Indonesian troops, and a UN presence. This was to be followed by a five-year reconstruction phase, characterized by infrastructural development efforts and preparations for resolving the political status of East Timor. At the end of the five-year period, a referendum would be held, to determine whether the East Timorese wanted independence or integration with Indonesia.191 President Habibie, on the other hand, informed Marker that a referendum was out of question; the offer of special autonomy was as far as he was prepared to go.

Three European Union ambassadors had a couple of weeks earlier visited East Timor on a fact-finding mission. They had in the end been evacuated by a military aircraft after a demonstration had escalated into a clash between pro-independence and pro-integration

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189 Crouch, op. cit., p. 157.
191 Ibid, p. 98.
groups. Due to the tense situation, Marker this time travelled to Baucau, East Timor’s second largest city, rather than Dili, for talks with the Bishops and representatives of pro-independence and pro-integrations groups. He again noted the contrast between the two groups, not only politically but also in their personal appearances: nervous, undernourished and fidgety as opposed to sleek, well-dressed and well-fed.\footnote{Ibid, p. 115.}

**Autonomy offer and CNRT distrust**

On July 28, 1998, the Indonesian government withdrew 400 troops from East Timor, and indicated that a further 600 would be pulled back in early August.\footnote{Offsetting this outward softness, TNI in May 1988 began to increase the number of military posts in East Timor, manned by paramilitary forces, rather than regular TNI personnel. For instance, thirty-six posts were set up in the Covalima district alone (Taudevin, op. cit., p. 144.)} Indonesia’s foreign minister Ali Alatas, in an interview with the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, explained the new softer stance and admitted that (following Suharto’s resignation) there was now ‘a window of opportunity’ being opened. The proposal to allow Timor Timur special status, he stated, indicated his government’s willingness to take into account that the province has a different history and different factors that all warrant a special autonomous region, and that the Indonesian government was prepared to grant the territory wide-ranging autonomy, excluding foreign policy, external defence and monetary and fiscal policy. A referendum, however, was out of the question, as an assessment of the wishes of the people already took place 22 years ago in 1976, ‘when the majority of the East Timorese people opted for integration and only a minority opposed it.’ Alatas added that another argument against a referendum was that it ‘would only reopen old wounds, and reignite violent disputes and conflict among the East Timorese, and may even lead to a renewed civil war.’ ‘Our proposal for a special autonomous region within the Republic of Indonesia represents the most realistic viable and peaceful solution.’\footnote{John McBeth, ‘A Special Case. Alatas Opens a Door to East Timor’, *Far Eastern Economic Revue*. Hong Kong, August 6, 1998.} Jamsheed Marker had a series of meetings with representatives of the newly formed CNRT, which revealed a very reserved reaction to the Indonesian proposal. There was profound distrust, and an insistence of concrete evidence of good faith by the Indonesians, such as the release of Xanana Gusmão.\footnote{Marker, op. cit., p. 102.} Gusmão and Ramos Horta both publicly rejected the special status proposal, reiterating the international nature of East Timor and the people’s right to self-determination, and therefore pointing out the integral role of international law and the United Nations.
International law and human rights are strengthened

The post-Suharto Indonesian government had by then ratified CAT, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Indonesia had signed CAT already in 1985, but ratifying a UN convention is a different matter than just signing it; in that it opens a state to further scrutiny by the official committee established to monitor each treaty. It also requires a government to offer at least minimal documentation and justification of its practices and, in the case of CAT, to make torture an offence under domestic law. This Indonesia also did in Law No. 5 of 1998.

And CAT was not the only serious international threat to impunity for local or regional evildoers. A broad diplomatic and activist centred campaign for the implementation of an International Criminal Court resulted in a conference of 160 countries in Rome in the summer of 1998. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), adopted on July 1998, states that the ICC can try cases of serious crimes committed on the territory of ratifying states or by one of their citizens, and includes no privileges for major powers. Some of the breaches of human rights falling within the jurisdiction of the ICC are Crimes of Aggression, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and the Crime of Genocide, all arguably applicable to East Timor. At the outset it was agreed that the Rome Statute would enter into force after sixty states had ratified it, and the number of signatories and ratifying nations steadily increased.196

Meetings in New York, Sydney, Dili, and Austria

Responding to the new situation Fretilin held, in August 1998, a National Extraordinary Conference in Sydney, Australia, marking the first time that Fretilin leaders from inside and outside Timor met. At this meeting, the absent Abílio Araújo was finally officially replaced by a presidium comprised of Lú-Olo (Francisco Guterres), as General coordinator of the Presidential Council of Fretilin, Mau Hudo, Secretary to Political Secretariat of Fretilin, Marí Alkatiri First Vice-Coordinator and Head of the External Delegation and Ma’Huno, Second Vice-Coordinator.197

In Dili, Bishop Belo convened some fifty representatives from differing East Timorese political factions to a two-day “reconciliation dialogue” at Dare, south of Dili. The site was supposedly chosen as the closest to a middle ground one could find in East Timor, seeing that members of all political parties had studied at the Jesuit-run seminary there in Portuguese days. Bishop Belo and Basílio do Nascimento, Bishop of Baucau, acted as mediators during talks, which lasted between 10 -11 September 1998. The meeting resulted in a joint communique with a statement saying that discussions should continue and be expanded to include guerilla fighters and Timorese in exile. The ultimate aim, it said, was to unify a vision and perception for a final effort to settle the problem of East Timor. In a separate statement, Ma’Huno stressed the need for Xanana Gusmão to take part in future talks. In what seemed to be an insult to the very idea of ‘reconciliation,’ Governor Abílio Soares soon after the Dare meeting issued an ultimatum that civil servants not supporting the Indonesian autonomy plan would be required to resign from their posts. This led to massive protests in


Dili and other towns; where the protesters not only supported the civil servants, but also demanded the resignation of Soares himself.198

Impunity for human rights abuses no longer to be taken for granted

In October 1998, former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet visited a London hospital for back surgery, when a Spanish jurist requested his arrest and extradition to Spain, accusing Pinochet of having ordered the murder and torture of Spanish nationals during the 1970s. The House of Lords finally decided that Pinochet could only be prosecuted for crimes committed after 1988, the year that the United Kingdom implemented legislation for CAT, the United Nations Convention Against Torture. Despite the fact that Pinochet was allowed to return to Chile, the unprecedented detention of a former head of state in a foreign country was seen by many as marking a watershed in international law.

A Falintil attack and severe repercussions

On November 9, 1998, Falintil forces attacked a military depot at Alas. Three Indonesian soldiers were killed, seven were taken hostages and a number of weapons were captured by the guerillas.199 TNI forces - in the shape of Battalions 744 and 745 - a few days later killed as many as 50 Timorese in the villages of Taitaduk and Barike. These two battalions were largely staffed by East Timorese soldiers, which suggested an attempt on part of the TNI to portray the conflict as an affair between rival East Timorese; a policy which had been unsuccessfully carried out since the invasion in 1975, and was to continue for another year. Soon after these events, the next Senior Officials meeting began in New York. The talks were soon overwhelmed by reports of harsh and serious human rights violations in East Timor. The authorities had expelled reporters and members of NGOs and sealed off the Alas area.

Portugal’s Ambassador Neves told Jamsheed Marker that he was under instructions to stop negotiations immediately, whereupon his Indonesian counterpart returned to Jakarta. Marker then talked to Portugal’s Prime Minister Gama and assured him that the UN would carry out a thorough inquiry, and Gama agreed to send his delegation back to the table. Marker then called Ali Alatas in Jakarta, who also instructed his delegation to continue the negotiations, but at the same time informed Marker that Jakarta would never permit a formal UN investigation. In Marker’s words, the negotiations had “reached a stage of public posturing.”200

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200 Marker, op. cit., pp.106-107. When reports of the massacre became public, Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reacted with a ’damage control’ statement, saying that only nine people had been killed, three of whom being Indonesian soldiers. DFAT based this claim on a visit made by an Australian Army Attaché who had visited Alas for a few hours, at all times accompanied by Indonesian military personnel. The DFAT claim had the effect of playing down concerns that the Indonesian military had committed atrocities against civilians (School of Hass, Companion to East Timor: Leaks. Canberra: UNSW. Accessed at: http://hass.unsw.adfa.edu.au/timor_companion/fracturing_the_bipartisan_consensus/leaks.php)
Political scepticism and rising tension

When Tamrat Samuel visited Indonesia and East Timor soon after, in early December 1998, he found an increasing skepticism about the autonomy proposal. Samuel concluded that “while outsiders and Minister Alatas talk about a window of opportunity, many in East Timor see in the present situation a door that has cracked ajar and needs to be pushed open for a rapid exit before it closes again.”201 Tamrat Samuel was followed by Jamsheed Marker and Francesc Vendrell, who once more visited Jakarta and Dili in mid-December. General Anwar Zacky Makarim told them frankly that he was arming some of the pro-integration East Timorese, whom he described as ‘loyal, law-abiding citizens’ in order to defend themselves against elements of the Falintil.202 The meetings in Dili with both sides were highly emotional; the pro-integrationists were menacing in their determination, while the pro-independence camp expressed their determination to attain total freedom. During their usual stopover at the Udayana command in Bali, General Damiri was “more belligerent than ever.”203 Following the now habitual meeting with the two bishops, Marker and Vendrell were taken to the Dili airport, where a chaotic demonstration forced them to be flown out by army helicopter to Kupang, West Timor, and from there to Jakarta. Clearly, the tension was ready to erupt into open, full-scale violence if nothing happened to distract the minds of the two sides.

A sudden and unexpected announcement

And then it did. A surprising breakthrough in the talks re the future of the disputed territory came after Australia’s Prime Minister John Howard in a letter to Habibie in late December 1998 suggested that an act of self-determination be held after a period of autonomy, a proposal which endorsed the long-held view of Portugal and CNRT, but stood in stark contradiction to the pro-Indonesian view hitherto upheld by various Australian administrations. An upset Habibie – used to the support of Australia in this matter - may or may not have muttered “et tu Brute” on this occasion.204 Habibie discussed the new situation, including the idea of a referendum in East Timor, with a few key personnel, including senior figures in the military such as generals Sintong Panjaitan (who had been removed from his East Timor command following the Santa Cruz massacre); and Feisal Tanjung, the Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security. The latest developments re ‘Timor Timur’ were then discussed at a meeting of the Indonesian cabinet’s Political and Security Committee on 25 January 1999, and at full cabinet meeting two days after. In an unexpected move following the second cabinet meeting, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and Information Minister Yunus Yosfiah together announced that the East Timorese would be offered an ‘autonomy plus’, and if that was not accepted, the cabinet would suggest to the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR, Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat) the release of East Timor from Indonesia. The new MPR was due to be formed after the Indonesian general elections in June 1999, and was scheduled to hold its first session in August.205 Habibie himself told the Australian Ambassador to Jakarta that he was going to move quickly; that he was not interested in any period of autonomy pre- the East Timorese vote to accept or reject the idea of staying within Indonesia.

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201 Marker, op. cit., p. 109.
204 Crouch, op. cit., pp. 158-159.
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It may well have been, as Geoffrey Robinson suggests, that Habibie and most of his cabinet – which included Generals Wiranto and Feisal Tanjung - finally agreed to a referendum because they were confident of a result in Indonesia’s favor, this based on a) the assumption that Indonesia’s long experience in orchestrating electoral results would be beneficial to them and b) a possible belief on their part that the East Timorese would actually opt for staying with Indonesia. During the whole period of occupation Indonesia’s intelligence apparatus had presented Jakarta with a picture of the resistance as nothing more than “a small band of disgruntled troublemakers” or GPK, Gerombalan Pengacau Keamanan (gang of security disturbers) with little influence on the majority of Tim Tim’s population.206

And then there were those who favored an East Timorese referendum for different reasons, i.e. to get rid of the costly and politically embarrassing problem once and for all. There were a number of politicians in Habibie's cabinet who had played no part in the decision to invade East Timor, and resented having to bear the burden – at international meetings and press conferences - of a policy for which they were not responsible and with which they did not agree. Among them were Adi Sasono, Ginandjar Kartasasmita and Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Habibie confidants and advisers who had publicly stated that East Timor should be given the right to self-determination, and that Indonesia was paying a too high diplomatic and political price for its 27th province.207

Jamsheed Marker suggests that while the decision may also have been motivated by genuine feelings of humanitarianism on Habibie’s part, it was mostly based “on the cool calculation that the rapidly increasing cost of the shackles was far in excess of the value.”208

Getting ready for the new situation – East Timor, New York, Jakarta

It is not an exaggeration to say that both sides ‘on the ground’ were initially stunned by the announcement. ‘The other side’ then acted decisively. On the very same day, a pro-autonomy umbrella organisation, FPDK (Forum Persuatan, Demokrasi Dan Keadilan, Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice), was declared in Dili. FDPK was headed by the city’s bupati (mayor) Domingos Soares, and its leading figures were mostly local government officers.209 Branches of FDPK were soon established in all thirteen districts, usually headed by the district head, and funded from the government budget. Thus began a ‘socialization campaign’, aimed at presenting autonomy as a preferable option to independence, in which government funded campaign meetings combined the handing out of T-shirts and rice with veiled or open threats. A circular was handed out by the governor to all district heads, stating that any civil servant who supported independence would lose his job, and on street-level young men were leaned on by militia groups to join them. Being un-cooperative became an increasingly dangerous option from early 1999.210

On January 28, 1999, talks began in New York between Jamsheed Marker, the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General, and the Directors-General of the Indonesian and Portuguese Foreign Ministries.211 Meanwhile on the ground in East Timor, attacks by militias on villages in the Covalima district resulted in the inflow of some 6000 refugees into the south-western town of Suai. Independence activists said it was a Wanra attack, but at least in

208 Marker, op. cit., p. 130.
the villages of Tilomar and Maudeme the Mahidi group were accused of being the perpetrators. The local priest in Suai, Father Hilario Madeira said that “the Integrasi attack villages in daylight and at night they are sheltered at an Indonesian army base at Salele, 10 km away. They use a lot of traditional weapons, knives, crossbows, spears and whatever rifles the military gives them.”

TNI, on the other hand, said the Wanra weren't responsible for the exodus into Suai and instead blamed Fretilin, who it accused of "terrorizing" the local population. Independence supporters and Catholic leaders like Bishop Belo didn't give much credit to this argument. "In 15 years here, I've never heard of Fretilin raiding a village and causing 6,000 people to flee. Yet, the moment the Wanra are formed, 6,000 had to flee." On February 9, 1999, the Australian DSD (Defence Signals Directorate) intercepted messages confirming that two Indonesian special forces units, codenamed Tribuana and Venus, had arrived in East Timor to join undercover operations. Tension increased, with clashes between pro-integration and pro-independence groups. In the village of Cassa, in the sub-district of Zumalai, the Mahidi militia killed several people, including a pregnant woman who was known to be the wife of a Falintil soldier. Mahidi’s leader was Cancio de Calvalho, whose coined name for the group, Mahidi, from the Indonesian words Mati Hidup Dengan Integrasi (Live or die for integration) was a tribute to an Indonesian officer, Brigadier-General Mahidin Simbolon, who was chief of staff in the Bali-based Udayana regional command, which included East Timor. Five days late DSD intercepted a telephone call from Eurico Guterres, one of the East Timorese militia figureheads, to the Tribuana unit, concerning the condition of an injured Mahidi member, upon which Tribuana replied that they knew that “Brigadier-General Simbolon is concerned that one of his crew is injured.” Between August and October a number of intercepts gradually revealed a chain of command down from Indonesian President B.J. Habibie's co-ordinating minister for politics and security, General Feisal Tanjung, to army generals and colonels in East Timor. Still, the Australian government continued its policy of disputing ABRI’s role in the violence in East Timor, in an attempt to prevent international involvement in East Timor.

In Dili, Lieutenant Colonel Yayat Sudrajat, the head of the SGI (Satuan Gabungan Intellijen; Kopassus intelligence unit), on 16 February held a meeting with militia leaders from all over the territory, and “demanded independence leaders and their families be wiped out.” On 19 February, a delegation of East Timorese pro-Indonesian civil administrators had a meeting with TNI’s General Wiranto in Jakarta to discuss the situation, pledge their support for the Indonesian cause and ask for help to achieve the wished result.

On 22 February 1999, the Australian head of DFAT (The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Ashton Calvert, met with US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth in Washington. Roth, reflecting the above described changing attitude towards Indonesia on the part of the US administration, was of the opinion that an international peacekeeping operation in East Timor was unavoidable. Calvert blamed the violence on East Timorese factions, a
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position that Roth described as “defaitist.” The transcript of the Calvert-Roth meeting was leaked to the media later that year, just as the DSD transcripts were, leading to considerable embarrassment for the government, which tried to downplay the significance of the meeting by saying that Roth had only been expressing a personal view. If that was indeed the case, it was the personal views of the US’s most influential regional bureaucrat, expressed in a meeting with Australia’s most senior foreign policy bureaucrat.221

On 10 February, almost two weeks ahead of the Roth-Calvert meeting, Xanana Gusmão was transferred from prison to house arrest in a suburb of Jakarta, to facilitate his taking part in further negotiations. Moving in with him were a team of five young Timorese men, ‘the Los Palos boys’, assigned from the Impettu student organization, serving as bodyguards, dispatchers of letters to embassies etc. A staff of five, including Kirsty Sword, established the Xanana Gusmão Support Office nearby.222 This move, combined with Gusmão’s high international visibility, may well have been yet one more factor behind Stanley Roth’s estimation re an unavoidable international involvement. One sign of ‘old foes’ taking heed of the new situation was when Peter Cockroft, the Jakarta chief of BHP visited Gusmão on the 16th for a discussion about the future of the Timor Gap. Gusmão assured Cockroft that an independent East Timor would respect the rights of the oil companies who were involved in the oil and gas prospecting in the area.223 The stage was now set, the mood was established, for a new chapter in East Timor’s struggle for independence.

221 School of HASS, op. cit.
222 Niner, op. cit., p. 184.
223 Sword Gusmão, op. cit., p. 203.
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Chapter 14. Militias, ballot and rampage

US involvement and a breakthrough at the UN

On 5 March, Xanana Gusmão was brought to the Indonesian Foreign Ministry for a meeting with US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, at the request of the latter. In a corridor Gusmão came across Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas. The two men shook hands and smiled “as if they were golf partners”, in a meeting which, in the words of Kirsty Sword Gusmão, was “the most unequivocal proof that time had changed.”1 During the talks between Albright and Gusmão, the Timorese leader emphasised the need to press the Indonesian side to rein in the increasingly violent pro-integration militias.2 After her meetings with Gusmão and Alatas, the Secretary said the United States favoured an ‘international presence’ in East Timor, but was not specific about what kind. She also said that her administration was concerned about the recent arming by ‘elements in the Indonesian military’, of people in East Timor who favoured staying as part of Indonesia.3 The meeting with Albright was the beginning of a busy week of meetings for Gusmão, who was visited by representatives of Amnesty International, the former Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, the ambassadors of South Africa, Norway and Britain, a Brazilian solidarity group, the Indonesian Commission for Women’s Rights, and an official from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was also interviewed by BBC, Radio Netherlands, the National Radio of Angola, and the Timorese Community Radio in Melbourne.4 Within a week of the Albright/Gusmão meeting, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced on 11 March 1999 that Indonesia and Portugal had at ministerial-level talks in New York agreed in principle to a ‘popular consultation’, for East Timor, in which the Timorese themselves would decide whether to accept or reject autonomy within Indonesia.5

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2 Ibid
4 Sword Gusmão, op. cit., p. 223.
5 ‘Popular consultation’ was a Jamsheed Marker compromise, as the term “referendum” was anathema for the Indonesian side, while the Portuguese had demanded that it be used in the agreement.
Militia groups

In a parallel scenery on the ground in East Timor, it appeared, at least to the outside observer, as if a number of pro-Indonesian militia groups sprang out of the ground in each of the territory’s 13 districts. These were the main groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Militia</th>
<th>District (Kapupaten)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tim Alfa</td>
<td>Lautem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Saka/Sera</td>
<td>Baucau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedjuang 59-75 Makikut⁶</td>
<td>Viqueque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ablai</td>
<td>Manufahi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHI</td>
<td>Aileu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahidi</td>
<td>Ainaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laksaur</td>
<td>Covalima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aitarak</td>
<td>Dili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besi Merah Putih</td>
<td>Liquica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hametin Merah Putih</td>
<td>Maliana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halilintar</td>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jati Merah Puti</td>
<td>Lospalos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darah Merah Integrasi</td>
<td>Ermera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakunar</td>
<td>Oecusse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also a number of smaller, local groups, especially in the Bobonaro area, where every sub-district had a group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Militia</th>
<th>Subdistrict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dadurus Merah Putih</td>
<td>Maliana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemuda Benteng</td>
<td>Balibo/ Batugade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armui Merah Putih</td>
<td>Atabai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumtur Merah Putih</td>
<td>Kailaco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hametin Merah Putih</td>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kael Merah Putih</td>
<td>Lolotoe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


⁶ In April 1999, Eurico Guterres – claiming to be a relative of António Metan, one of the leaders of the 1959 rebellion – created the militia group 59/75, thereby linking it to the anti-Portuguese Viqueque uprising.
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Aileu Pencinta Integrisi  
Aku Hidup untuk Integrasi (AHI).  
Alfa Ablai  
Besi Semadok  
Guntur  
Harimau 55  
Kelombok Naga Merah  
Loromea  
Pana  
Tarah  
Tim Pancasila

Babo Soares adds still another four groups:

Amanat Integrasi  
Sera (Bobonaro)  
Rajawali  
Mahadomi

While the militias may have seemed to be a new, or at least recent, phenomenon, many of the groups had been around for years, albeit sometimes under different names. Others had been lying dormant and were re-activated as the circumstances demanded. Halilintar was the most senior militia group in East Timor, having served the interests of the Indonesian military already in 1975, during the *Operasi Flamboyan* (Operation Poinciana Tree), which preceded the outright invasion of the territory. But even in the mid-1970s, indigenous East Timorese militias were not a new phenomenon. The Portuguese had since the days of the Topasses played out Timorese against Timorese, notably so in the brutal quellings of the Dom Boaventura-led uprising in 1912 and in Viqueque in 1959. Like the later Indonesian occupiers, the Portuguese found this to be a cheap and efficient way to suppress opposition and to provide “security” in the territory. The use of para-military and militia groups also made it possible for the Indonesian military to keep a lower profile, as international attention to and awareness of East Timor increased. Estimates on the total number of militia members vary greatly, from 4,000 (according to a TAPOL report in August 1998) to 8,000, which was claimed by Korem chief-of-staff Lieutenant-Colonel Supadi at about the same time.

Recruitment efforts for the militias were sometimes aimed at whole villages. In one case, twelve people in Atara village, Ermera District, were killed on 16 May 1999, apparently because the village had refused to join the militia group Tim Pancasila. During an Amnesty International visit to East Timor in May 1999 (more of that below), several people witnessed

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having been threatened, beaten or detained because they had refused to join militia groups.\textsuperscript{10} However, as Robinson points out, it would be a mistake to see the militias as mere puppets of Indonesia. Some had had family members killed by Falintil, or were already involved in gang-related criminal activities such as protection rackets. At an early stage of the occupation, the Indonesian military had formed the para-military groups Ratih and Hansip (cf. Chapters 10 & 11), out of which sprang local militias in the mid-1980s, such as Saka. The TBOs (\textit{Tenaga Bantuan Operasi}, operations assistants), were another source of militia members; traumatized former porters and errand boys, some of whom later became important militia leaders, such as Eurico Guterres of Aitarak and Joanico Cecario of Saka. Aitarak, one of the most important and certainly one of the most vicious groups, evolved out of Gada Paksi (cf. Chapter 13). Eurico Guterres, who in January 1999 had been appointed Gada Paksi’s leader by General Adam Damiri, now became commander of Aitarak and also overall commander of militias in the central, Dili area.\textsuperscript{11}

![Eurico Guterres](image)

The structure of the militia can be conceived as having three tiers, with the top tier consisting of groups that were armed and trained by TNI as part of the lowest tier of TNI territorial forces, Wanra (\textit{Perlawanan Rakyat}, People’s Resistance), or Kamra (\textit{Keamaan Rakyat}, Civil Defence Units), groups. The second tier received only limited TNI arms and were trained by tier 1 groups. The third tier were localised auxiliary groups, who provided labour, guard duties and recruits for the higher organisations. In practise, this neat scheme was often disrupted by overlapping between the various groups, due to local conditions and personalities.\textsuperscript{12} Apart from the tier one groups, the majority were armed with weapons such as machetes, spears and knives or even home-made firearms. When attacking, the militias did so as noisily and frightfully as possible, and the result was often burnt houses and mutilated corpses left for everybody to see.\textsuperscript{13} Douglas Kammen has noted that militia members – as well as other collaborators with the Indonesian authorities - were well aware of the great threat they faced, should their masters and protectors in the TNI withdraw from East Timor. Kammen also writes of the ‘crucial class dimension’ involved; upper echelon collaborators might leave for

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{10} Amnesty International, 1999a, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{12} David J. Kilkullen, \textit{The Political Consequences of Military Operations in Indonesia 1945-99}. Sydney: School of Politics, University of New South Wales, 2000, pp. 133-135.
\textsuperscript{13} Robinson, op. cit., pp. 276 - 277.
\end{footnotesize}
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Jakarta, Macau or Portugal, while the only option for the majority of the militia members was to cross the border into West Timor and face an unknown future there.\(^{14}\)

In December 1998, Lt. Colonel Hartono, “Tono”, Suratman, military commander of East Timor, announced that there were plans to arm civilians in East Timor’s 440 localities, ‘in order to protect villages that are prone to rebel attacks.’\(^{15}\) These armed groups were to sort under the official umbrella of the above-mentioned Wanra or Kamra groups, both formally affiliated subdivisions of TNI, specified in the Indonesian Constitution and the 1988 Defense Law, which stipulated that civilians have the right and obligation to defend the state by joining basic military training.\(^{16}\) The creation of Kamra and Wanra groups and the (re-) activation of a plethora of other militias was a way of ‘sub-contracting’ the use of armed violence in the territory. In the early months of 1999, a recruitment drive resulted in 1000 new members of Wanra groups in East Timor.\(^{17}\)

Militia members on all levels were East Timorese, but they were backed by the Indonesian army and the civilian authorities – and behind them was ‘a shadowy organization of covert operators’ consisting of Indonesian intelligence personnel with a chain of command which linked Dili to Jakarta.\(^{18}\) The shadowy organization operating behind the scenery of the Operasi Sapu Jagad (Operation Clean Sweep), which aimed to cajole the Timorese to accept autonomy within Indonesia through fear and intimidation, was somewhat illuminated in April 1999, when Tomás Gonçalves defected to Macau, where he had meetings with an Australian Intelligence officer. Gonçalves had been one of the major pro-Indonesian actors in 1974-1975, and was now leading a militia group in Ermera. Gonçalves told the Australian officer that in late 1998 he had met with Major General Adam Damiri, commander of the Udayana Regional Military Command in Bali, Colonel Tono Suratman, TNI commander in Dili, and Lieutenant Colonel Yayat Sudrajat, of the SGI (Satuan Gabungan Intellijen; Kopassus intelligence unit) in Dili, who told him about their plans to arm militias.\(^{19}\) The SGI also delivered three trucks of arms for Gonçalves group on March 24, 1999. Two days later, Gonçalves attended a meeting in Dili, where Abílo Osório Soares, the governor of Timor Timur, told him to “prepare to liquidate all the senior pro-independence people – and their parents, sons, daughters and grandchildren. If they sought shelter in the churches … kill them all, even the priests and nuns.”\(^{20}\) In early April, Gonçalves and other pro-Indonesian East Timorese were, at a meeting in Jakarta, promised more weapons and money by Major General Kiki Syahnakri, Operations Assistant to TNI Chief of Staff.\(^{21}\) It was from Jakarta that Gonçalves left for Macau, stating afterwards that the level of violence planned was more than he could bear.

\(^{14}\) Kammen, op. cit., p. 181.
\(^{15}\) School of HASS, op. cit.
\(^{16}\) Jakarta Post, October 27, 2007.
\(^{19}\) Interview with Tomás Gonçalves, ABC Television Four Corners, 14 February 2000, quoted in Desmond Ball, ‘Silent Witness. Australian Intelligence and East Timor’, in Tanter, Ball & van Klinken, op. cit., p. 188.
\(^{20}\) Tanter, Ball & van Klinken, op. cit., p. 188. See also Leonard C. Sebastian, Realpolitik Ideology. Indonesia’s Use of Military Force. Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2006, p. 121.
\(^{21}\) Syahnakri had been removed from his East Timor command following the Liquica killings in January 1995 (cf. Ch. 13.) Tomás Gonçalves, in an interview with Radio Hilversum, 6 October 1999, named Syahnakri as one of nine senior military officers implementing the militia strategy within TNI. The others were, according to him, Zaky Makarim, Amirul Isaeni, Glenny Kairupan, Tyasno Sudarto, Adam Damiri, Tono Suratman, Wiyotomo Nugroho and Yayat Sudrajat.
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Presidium Juventude Loriku Aswa’in

In March 1999, Xanana Gusmão called a number of new generation (Geração Foun) leaders to a meeting in Jakarta. At this meeting, they were asked by Xanana to be the ‘motor’ of the campaign for the independence vote, and for all the youth and student organisations to unite for this purpose. This also happened, when, at a meeting in April at Yayasan HAK22 (Hukum, hak Asasi dan Keadilan, Law, Human Rights and Justice) the East Timor Human Rights and Legal Aid Foundation in Dili, fourteen youth and student organisations formed the Presidium of Youth Lorikeet Warriors (Presidium Juventude Loriku Aswa’in). During the following months, some 850 East Timorese students in Indonesia return to East Timor to take part in the CNRT campaign in Dili and in the various districts. They knew well that doing so meant putting themselves in great danger.23

UN representatives on the ground in East Timor

The UN sent a six member assessment team to the region between March 18 and April 6, 1999. Led by Francesc Vendrell, the team visited Indonesia, East Timor, Australia, New Zealand, and also Portugal. They found “a dangerous level of tension and political violence, which, if not quickly curbed, could easily spiral out of control.”24 Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, again visited Jakarta in early April, and in a forceful meeting with Habibie, demanded that he improve the law and order situation in East Timor, while US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth followed this up with a public statement calling for the disarmament of the militia. In spite of militia violence, Xanana Gusmão’s orders to Falintil had been to refrain from any action. Since the Alas events of November 1998, this discipline had largely been respected. But as violence steadily increased, Gusmão decided he could no longer fail to respond. On 5 April he issued a statement declaring:

I now wish to inform the international community that the situation has reached an intolerable limit in East Timor. Therefore, I am compelled to authorize the Falintil guerrillas to undertake all necessary action in defence of the population of East Timor against the unprovoked and murderous attacks of armed civilian groups and ABRI. In response to the numerous appeals from the People of East Timor, I also authorize a general popular insurrection against the armed militia groups who have been killing the population with impunity under the indifferent eye of the international community.25

The Indonesian authorities were incensed by what they called Xanana’s ‘call to arms’ or ‘war cry.’ The international community – i.e. foreign diplomatic missions – were eager to meet Gusmão to seek clarification of his statement and to express concern that it might be used against the pro-independence side. Gusmão, however, told the diplomats that he had merely authorised the people to act against their attackers ‘not in the spirit of wanton violence … but in pure self-defence’.26

22 Yayasan Hak was established in August 1996 by a group of young Timorese and Indonesian activists. The organization provided legal assistance by East Timorese and Indonesian lawyers to political prisoners, as well as humanitarian assistance for families of political prisoners.


24 Marker, op. cit., p. 140.


26 Sword Gusmão, op. cit., pp. 227-228.
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In the meantime, over three hundred participants attended a CNRT conference in Melbourne, between April 5 and April 9, 1999. The meeting recommended the establishment of a special commission, comprised of all social and political groups, which in its turn should appoint a commission of legal professionals to assist with the process of drafting an East Timor constitution. The participants in Melbourne also assumed at this point that CNRT would be able to take over existing and functioning political and administrative structures once the Indonesians were gone.27 That was soon proven to be a foregone conclusion.

Massacres in Liquica and Dili

One day after Gusmaõ’s statement, and on the second day of the CNRT Melbourne meeting, the Besi Merah Putih militia, accompanied by Indonesian military and police, surrounded a church in Liquica, where hundreds of people had taken refuge following a wave of violence in the area. The militia dragged two priests out of the church and took them to the local military district headquarters, and then launched a deadly attack on the rest, men women and children alike. The Indonesian military did nothing to stop the proceedings. Various numbers of deaths have been reported, from 25 to 60. Afterwards, the militia forced the local people to hoist the Indonesian national flag.

After the massacre, the Australian government ‘moved into damage control mode,’ with Foreign Minister Alexander Downer commenting that Indonesian military didn’t themselves kill people, but it was a “very violent and unfortunate incident and we hope that such an incident doesn’t occur again.”28 The US responded by dispatching Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander in Chief of all US military forces in the Pacific region, to meet with General Wiranto, the Indonesian armed forces commander, on April 8, two days after the massacre. Blair’s mission was to tell Wiranto that the time had come to put an end to militia violence but, according to US journalist Allan Nairn, who gained access to a classified tape on the meeting, he did quite the opposite.29 At no point did Blair tell Wiranto to stop the militia operation, instead he offered promises of forthcoming riot-control training for the Indonesian armed forces, and invited Wiranto to be his personal guest in Hawaii. According to Indonesian officers whom Nairn spoke to afterwards, Wiranto was ‘delighted’ by the meeting, and the officers themselves took this as a green light to proceed with the militia operation. When the State Department was informed of the meeting, Blair was ordered to make a ‘corrective phone call’ to Wiranto. Nairn succeeded in acquiring a report also of this conversation, where Blair once again failed to tell Wiranto to shut the militias down, while Wiranto told Blair that the TNI or the Indonesian police did not support any one group in East Timor.30

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28 Ibid.

29 Nairn had been present during the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991, and subsequently banned from the territory. He re-entered on several occasions, and his reports had been a crucial part in the US Congress decision to cut off military aid to Indonesia in 1993.

The meeting and subsequent telephone conversation between Wiranto and Blair shows the United States ambivalence on the East Timor issue. On the one hand, there had been close relationship between Washington and Jakarta throughout the Cold War and its immediate aftermath, while on the other hand, in Congress there was a strong and increasingly vocal group which had quite successfully agitated against Jakarta’s human rights record in Indonesia generally, and in East Timor in particular. This change in outlook had not, however, trickled down to the military, as already shown in Chapter 13 above.

There was also, following Suharto’s ousting as President, an apparent ambivalence from the Indonesian side. As President, Habibie became Supreme Commander of the TNI, but as a civilian without a military background he exerted little authority over the armed forces. Wiranto, as Commander-in-Chief of TNI, expressed support for Habibie’s January initiative, but it soon became apparent that he represented a minority within the army. Unlike most top officers the vast majority of whom had served in East Timor and come from the elite corps Kopassus, Wiranto’s career trajectory owed little to the annexation nor did he have a Kopassus background. Although he is unlikely to have been instrumental in arming the militias, his failure to stop Operasi Sapu Jagad, if that was his intention, can only be explained by his lack of authority within the TNI and his inability to rein in the hardliners.31

Hamish McDonald has offered a ‘parallel explanation,’ in which General Feisal Tanjung, Wiranto’s predecessor as armed forces commander, and an erstwhile member of the military team that successfully manipulated the ‘Act of free choice’ in Irian Jaya/West Papua in 1969, operated a chain of command parallel to that wielded by Wiranto, using officers with Kopassus and East Timor backgrounds, in particular the two major-generals Zacky Anwar Makarim and Sjafrie Sjamsuddin. These officers were, like Tanjung, associated with the “Green” or conspicuously Islamic faction active in the Indonesian forces in the last years of the Soeharto era, while Wiranto and his key aides belonged to the “Red and White” or more secular nationalist faction (the name derived from Indonesia’s national flag.)32

There were clear warnings from leading Indonesian figures that the military would not accept independence: “The military are not going to accept it. They will subvert it”, said the Director of Jakarta’s Centre for Strategic and International Studies.33 David Kilkullen has written of a breakdown or weakening of formal power structures in Indonesia during periods of crises, such as the collapse of the ‘Tiger economies’ in 1997, leading to a power diffusion. That allowed informal structures to develop political and military power at the local level while being subject to little control from higher levels.34 And between the local level and the Habibie/Wiranto level operated the ‘shadowy organization of covert operators’ as alluded to above.

33 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 August, 1999.
Kiki Syahnakri, one of those ‘shadowy operators’, if we are to believe defected militia leader Tomás Gonçalves, arrived in Dili on 14 April 1999 on a ‘working visit’ that saw him conduct high level meetings until at least 20 April, the day an Indonesian top brass delegation led by General Wiranto arrived from Jakarta to meet with militia leaders. With no leading Indonesian operators – be they open or shadowy - present, it was obvious that neither the TNI nor the police hindered the militia violence which forced the CNRT to dissolve its branches in western and central districts of East Timor during April 1999; its head office in Dili was closed on the 17th. During a mass gathering of pro-integration militia and supporters in Dili on that day, Aitarak commander Eurico Guterres ordered all pro-integration militias to conduct a cleansing of all those who betrayed integration, and kill them if needed. East Timor Governor Abílio Soares and TNI Commander Tono Suratman were both present on the occasion “to oversee the monster they had helped to create.” Suratman, interviewed by Australian Channel 9 television in January 1999, expressed already at that point that he was fully aware of to what length Guterres and other militia leader were prepared to go:

I want to give you this message: If the pro-independence side wins, it is not going to be just the government of Indonesia that has to deal with what follows. The UN and Australia are also going to have to solve the problem, for there will be no limit. Everything is going to be destroyed. East Timor will not exist as it does now. It’ll be much worse than twenty-three years ago.

After the meeting, the Besi Mera Putih and Aitarak militias attacked the homes of pro-independence leaders, and then turned against the house of Manuel Carrascalão, the founder of GRPRTT (Gerakan Rekonsiliasi dan Persuatan Rakyat Timor Timur, the Movement for Reconciliation and Unity of the people of East Timor), who had become increasingly vocal in his criticism of the excesses of the Indonesian security forces in East Timor. There were at the time 160 or so people staying in Carrascalão’s house and compound; 143 of those being IDPs (internally displaced peoples) who had fled from militia violence in Alas, Turiscai, Ainaro, Maliana, Maubara and Liquica. At least fifteen people were killed, including Carrascalão’s son. This attack was witnessed by foreign reporters, several of whom were beaten. At no time did the army or police intervene to end the violence; nor did they when, after the attack on Carrascalão’s house, militia ransacked the office of Suara Timor Timur (the Voice of Timor Timur), the only newspaper operating in the territory.

The Irish Foreign Minister David Andrews and Tom Hyland of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign were in Dili at the time. Andrews personally witnessed the unconcern and inaction of the East Timor military commander, Colonel Tono Suratman, in the face of

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35 The James Dunn Report, *Crimes Against Humanity in East Timor, January to October 1999: Their Nature and Causes* (February 2001) concludes that Syahnakri’s involvement in human rights violations in East Timor was “peripheral”; while van Klinken and Bourchier suspects that it is more likely that it was “substantial.” (Gerry van Klinken & David Bourchier, ‘Crimes Against Humanity in East Timor 1999: The Key Suspects’, In Richard Tanter, Desmond Ball & Gerry van Klinken (eds.) *Masters of Terror: Indonesia’s Military and Violence in East Timor*: Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006, p. 137.
36 Amnesty International, 1999a op. cit.
37 Niner, op. cit., p. 192.
39 Amnesty International, 1999a, op. cit. Data gathered and presented in a joint statement from several NGO’s in East Timor gave a number of IDP’s in the territory at the time as exceeding 18,000, with at least 1200 in Dili alone (ETISC: Getting Away with Murder), http://www.etan.org/et99/may/16-22/15etisc4.htm
40 Amnesty International, 1999a, op. cit.
appeals from Manuel Carrascalão.\footnote{Mario Carrascalão, the former Governor of East Timor, claimed from his refuge in Macau that he had a tape on which militia leader Eurico Guterres threatened to kill him. Carrascalão said the threats had been made in the presence of Colonel Tono Suratman, and three TNI generals soon before militia attacked the home of his brother, Manuel (ETISC: Getting Away with Murder) \url{http://www.etan.org/et99/may/16-22/15etisc4.htm}}\footnote{Jamsheed Marker, 	extit{East Timor: A Memoir of the Negotiations for Independence}. Jefferson, North Carolina and London: Mcfarland & Company, Publishers, 2003, p. 141.} He immediately went to Jakarta and alerted the diplomatic community about the murders, while Hyland contacted the international solidarity movement. Together, their reports ‘added considerable weight’ to the international concern over what was now happening in East Timor.\footnote{ETISC, op. cit.} One of those showing concern was US President Bill Clinton, who wrote to President Habibie and called on him to do more to bring the militia to heel.\footnote{Damien Kingsbury, 	extit{Power Politics and the Indonesian Military}, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, p. 120.}

General Wiranto assured Clinton that the violence could be controlled and, on 20 April, flew to Dili, accompanied by General Subagyo, the highest-ranking officer in TNI after Wiranto himself. With him were also the National Police Chief General Roesmanhandi, and Major General Anwar Zacky Makarim. Makarim was a former longtime intelligence officer in Timor, and more recently chief of the army’s intelligence agency, BIA. In the early 1990s, he had been a military intelligence officer in Aceh, at the height of a counterinsurgency campaign in which the army mobilized armed local militia groups to assist their effort to crush a local independence movement.\footnote{Kingsbury, op. cit., pp. 113-115.} Major General Kiki Syahnakri met up with the others in Dili.

Wiranto had since late 1998 publicly developed the idea of assigning militias as auxiliary forces primarily to the army but also to the police to help maintain order in areas prone to ‘security disturbances’, such as East Timor. An addition to the already existing Wanra and Kamra groups was the Pam Swakarsa, government-funded ‘community self-defence groups’; for all practical reasons a voluntary militia without a formal line of accountability.\footnote{Ibid, p. 118.} On 20 April, 1999, more than 1,200 Pam Swakarsa members were installed in Dili. Eurico Guterres and Manuel de Souza were thus formally recruited to the cause, along with their already established militia groups, Aitarak and Besi Merah Putih. These militia groups ran in parallel with their ‘political wing’, the inappropriately named Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice (FPDK, 	extit{Forum untuk Persatuan, Demokrasi dan Keadilan}). The Pam Swakarsa in Timor were officially intended to ward off the threat from the ‘terrorist’ Falintil. However, as Kingsbury points out, this was an exceptionally thin piece of logic, not only because Falintil did not attack, but more so since Pam Swakarsa themselves perpetrated violence on the people they were allegedly ‘protecting.’\footnote{Ibid, p. 118.}

Wiranto and his team, presumably with some advance preparations already made by Syahnakri, organised the signing of a peace pact, and the creation of the KPS (\textit{Komisi Perdamaian dan Stabilitas}, Commission for Peace and Stability) in Bishop Belo’s residence in Dili, on 21 April. Signing the document from the pro-Indonesian camp were Domingos Soares, head of the FPDK, and João Tavares, the overall commander of the militia force. The pro-independence camp was represented by Leandro Isaac and Manuel Carrascalão. The document had already been signed in Jakarta by Xanana Gusmão. Also signing the document were Governor Abílio Soares, Colonel Tono Suratman, East Timor police chief Colonel Timbul Silaen and a member of Konnas HAM (\textit{Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia}).
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National Commission on Human rights), Joko Sugianto. Wiranto signed as a witness, while Belo did not, stating that he was only present as a witness, not a signatory. 47

The signing of the agreement between representatives of integrationists and CNRT reflected the TNI view that the conflict in East Timor was a civil war, with Indonesian military caught in the middle, and eventually proved to have precious little positive effect on the situation in East Timor. This was soon demonstrated to harrowing effect during the following week.

Already the day after the signing of the peace accord, militias threatened civilians and roamed Dili at night. All pro-independence activists and outspoken leaders went into hiding, including those who were members of the KPS. In Bazartete, five youths were killed when members of Besi Merah Putih attacked the town. The same militia tortured to death a village chief and local CNRT leader in Maluskiik in the Ermera region. On 25 April TNI personnel forced everyone in the town of Tibar to take a blood oath with sheep's blood mixed with liquor and join (again) the Besi Merah Putih militia. On 26 April, fully armed TNI troops and the Tim Saka militia patrolled the streets of Baucau in trucks. They issued an announcement ordering everyone to hoist the red-and-white Indonesian flag and to wear red-and-white head and arm bands, to greet a planned rally by the pro-integration forces. In the Oecusse enclave, the Sakunar militia forced civil service employees to join the FPDK (Forum untuk Persatuan, Demokrasi dan Keadilan, Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice.) They were also ordered to get down on their knees and kiss the feet of Simão Lopes, Sakunar's leader. In Bobonaro, militias cut off the ear of a 20 year old youth and forced him to eat it, with a machete held to his throat. Afterwards, they trampled him almost to death and dumped him at the local TNI post. 48

Gruesome brutality, however, was not a prerogative of the militias. Toward the end of February 1999, a group of eleven militia members disappeared in Ermera, only to turn up as decaying corpses in the local health clinic in Gleno at the end of April. In conversations with UNAMET staff, the Indonesian authorities used these deaths to portray the CNRT as a vicious movement that could not be trusted, suggesting that both sides were equally involved in the escalating East Timor violence. 49

In the face of increasing international concern about East Timor, now fuelled by the Andrews/Hyland reports, Australian Prime Minister Howard met President Habibie in Bali on 27 April to discuss the situation. Howard then asked Habibie to support an international peacekeeping force to East Timor, a suggestion which Habibie rejected. 50 The meeting resulted in no change of direction of Australian policy re Indonesia/East Timor. Instead, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer “was effusive in his praise of the Indonesian authorities, saying that they were committed to the laying down of arms… ‘we have no reason at all to doubt their goodwill.” 51 It seems, however, that Australia did indeed behind the scenes doubt Indonesia’s goodwill. As early as March 1999 the Australian Defense moved an additional

brigade of troops to Darwin, and exercises were held in June, simulating a possible landing in East Timor.52

The 5 May tripartite agreement

While the situation deteriorated in Timor, talks continued during April at the UN in New York on the proposed popular consultation in East Timor. The UN proposed a number of security arrangements which, in addition to the requirement of neutrality of the army and police, included that paramilitary groups and militia forces be disarmed, that Indonesia undertake a substantial and verifiable reduction of its military presence in East Timor and that both the remaining Indonesian military and the Falintil forces would be confined to designated areas. The UN also demanded that the Indonesian police, supported and advised by a number of UN civilian police, be responsible for the maintenance of law and order at the time of consultation and to supervise the escort of ballot papers and boxes to and from the polling.53

The government of Portugal was insistent that a neutral force was needed, but the Indonesian position remained absolutely clear - Indonesia must remain solely responsible for security during the consultation. By taking too strong a position on the security provisions, or insisting on a diminished Indonesian role, the UN would risk unravelling the negotiations.54

To enhance the integrationist side among the East Timorese, and in preparation for the now seemingly inevitable referendum, one more pro-autonomy party, BRTT (Barisan Rakyat Timor Timur; East Timor’s People’s Front), was established by former UDT-leader cum Roving Ambassador for Indonesia, Francisco Lopes da Cruz on April, 29. Like its predecessor, FPDK (Forum Persuatan, Demokrasi Dan Keadilan, Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice) it was funded by the Indonesian government and supported by the local administration.55 A difference between the two parties was that some of the leaders of BRTT were concerned that militia violence was counterproductive, while the FPDK was more closely linked to the militia groups, with which it claimed an “advisory” relationship.56

As if to make mockery of any notion that the Indonesian military was keeping a neutral stance, members of TNI’s Kopassus unit, the police mobile brigade and territorial soldiers mingled with members of the Halintar militia at a pro-autonomy rally in the western town of Atabae on 1 May. The rally was presided over by João Tavares, the overall commander of the paramilitary groups. A pig was ritually beheaded and its blood mixed with home-distilled alcohol and drunk in an Indonesian loyalty toast.57

On 5 May 1999, it was formally agreed in a tripartite agreement, witnessed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and signed by Foreign Ministers Ali Alatas of Indonesia and Jaime Gama of Portugal, that a UN administered popular consultation to determine the future status of East Timor would be held on 8 August in the same year. The agreements consisted of three parts, 1) the agreement between Indonesia and Portugal which requested the UN Secretary-General to conduct a “popular consultation” asking the people of East Timor if they would accept or reject the autonomy plan; (2) the agreement on the modalities for the popular consultation; and (3) the agreement on the reduction of the military presence in East Timor.58

53 Martin, op. cit., p. 31.
55 Martin, op. cit., p. 43.
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consultation; and (3) the agreement on security arrangements, in which the UN and Portugal in the end had yielded to the Indonesian demand of sole responsibility.

According to the agreement, both Portugal and Indonesia would be allowed to send fifty-strong observer delegations to Timor. To this Indonesia added a Jakarta-based ministerial level Task Force (SATGAS P3TT, Satuan Tugas Pengamanan Penentuan Pendapat Mengenai Timor Timur, the Task Force for the Implementation of the Popular Consultation in East Timor), led by Political and Security Minister Feisal Tanjung. It was represented in Dili by a group headed by Indonesia’s former Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, representatives of the ministries of the Jakarta Task Force and two TNI Generals, Anwar Zacky Makarim and Sjafrie Sjamsuddin. As already mentioned, Makarim had for many years been involved in East Timor, and Major General Sjafrie Sjamsuddin shared this experience. He had served in Kopassus in both combat and intelligence, first in the deadly nanggala teams, then as head of the Kopassus intelligence in East Timor, a position he held at the time of the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991.

According to a secret 70-page document obtained by The Australian, there was also a lower level task force set up in Dili, chaired by the Dili bupati Domingos Soares. The document also listed East Timor’s Governor, José Osorio Abílio Soares, its military commander, Colonel Toto Suratman, and police chief Colonel Timbul Silaen as “advisers” to the task force and, bizarrely enough, that militia leader Eurico Guterres had been made the operational co-ordinator for civil security (!) in the capital.

During this period, 8 May to 27 May, an Amnesty International delegation of three people visited Indonesia and East Timor. They met spokespersons from both sides, interviewed witnesses and victims of human rights violations in East Timor, and were themselves witnesses to an attack by armed militias on the houses of independence supporters in DILI. The delegation found that a general atmosphere of intimidation and insecurity existed in East Timor, and that at least 34 people had been extra-judicially executed by militias or by the security forces. The delegation also found that the violations were part of a well-organized campaign to threaten and intimidate the East Timorese population to support autonomy within Indonesia, and that there was compelling evidence of direct involvement by government authorities, the Indonesian army and the government police. The Indonesian side accused Falintil of having been involved in 30 violent incidents since the 21 April peace accord, but failed to respond when Amnesty requested further information about these incidents. On the other hand, Amnesty confirmed Falintil’s involvement in the execution of three members of the TNI and one civilian on 31 October 1998, and noted other reports where independence supporters had threatened or assaulted Indonesian civilians in East Timor.

The overwhelming majority of victims in East Timor, however, were independence activists and supporters, many of whom had been politically active and therefore had become ‘visible’ during the more permissive period June-September 1988. The Amnesty delegation also found that pressure was being brought on the estimated 36,000 civil servants in East Timor to use their influence to obtain support for the autonomy option in their local communities. Those not willing were automatically assumed to be members of the CNRT and

59 Kingsbury, op. cit., 120.
therefore risked retributions, ranging from the withholding of wages, to dismissal or outright threats of violence from militias.61

UNAMET

On 21 May, Kofi Annan appointed Ian Martin as his Special Representative (SRSG) for East Timor. Martin had been Secretary-General of Amnesty International in the years 1986-1992, and had since then held a number of senior positions with the United Nations and other international organizations, the most recent being Deputy High Representative for Human Rights in Bosnia Herzegovina. Annan then presented his proposals for UNAMET (UN Assistant Mission in East Timor) to the Security Council, which was formally accepted by the Council on 11 June. Ian Martin had by then already arrived in Dili and established headquarters at a former teacher training college. An UNAMET office, headed by Tamrat Samuel, was also established in Jakarta. At the UN in New York the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), assumed overall responsibility for the East Timor negotiations.

The UN also established a Support Group for East Timor of over 30 member states. Out of these countries, a self-styled ‘Core Group’ of five of the most closely engaged countries, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the United States, began to meet to coordinate their support to the UN role.62

In Dili, a senior UNAMET team was gradually assembled during June 1999. It consisted of a Police Commissioner (from Australia), a Chief Electoral Officer (United States), a Chief Military Liaison Officer (Bangladesh), a Chief Political Affairs Officer (Singapore) and a Chief Administrative Officer (the Netherlands.) Total international staffing of UNAMET eventually reached over 1000, including 400 volunteer DEOs (District Electoral Officers) from more than seventy countries. Many of them had already fulfilled similar roles in Cambodia and Bosnia. There were also 274 CIVPOL (UN Civilian Police), drawn from 27 countries and headed by an Australian. Their role was to advise the Indonesian police and to supervise the movements of ballot boxes and papers during the process. They were unarmed, as were the 50 MLOs (Military Liaison Observers) from thirteen different countries. Indonesia had adamantly refused any foreign troops in Timor, but had agreed to unarmed military observers, and then only after the addition of ‘liaison’ to the usual title ‘military observers.’63 Anwar Zacky Makarim was chief liaison officer with the UNAMET from the Indonesian side.

The DEOs, CIVPOLs and MLOs underwent training in Darwin, Australia, before being deployed to East Timor. The first group arrived in Darwin in mid-June and the last had been trained and sent to East Timor by 8 July. They were rapidly out travelling in the regions to identify space for regional offices and planned 200 registration centres.64 UNAMET also established a campaign of information and education with regard to the ballot process. This was conducted in Tetun, Bahasa Indonesia, English and Portuguese, and was disseminated through the press, TV, and radio: a Japanese government contribution of several thousand transistor radio sets proved particularly helpful in this regard.65 The speed with which UNAMET was implemented and present on the ground in East Timor, was to a large degree

61 Amnesty International, 1999a, op. cit.
65 Marker, op. cit., p. 173.
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made possible by the use of a trust fund with large contributions from Portugal, Japan, Australia and the UK.66

Delays, meetings and continuing violence

UNAMET’s Political Affairs Office had the job of assessing whether the conditions existed for a free and fair ballot. Their advice put to the head of the mission and to the UN authorities in New York in July, was not to proceed. In spite of this advice, the DPA, DPKO and the Core Group wished to proceed, feeling that a delay might derail the process by providing Indonesia with an excuse to back out of the May 5 agreement. There was also a perceived risk that support for the mission would decline in the Security Council in case of a delay.67

The date of the ballot was, however, twice postponed, first from 8 August to 21 August, and finally to 30 August. The first delay occurred because UNAMET was not ready to begin registration by 22 June, as required by the original timetable. However, logistics was not the most serious problem. Worse was the security situation. KPS had been given the specific role within the Security Agreement to elaborate, in cooperation with the UN, a code of conduct for the laying down of arms and taking the necessary steps to achieve disarmament. The KPS were not even close to achieving this, as the Indonesian authorities failed to provide the pro-independence representatives guarantees for their safety. Fearing for their lives, and thus unable to participate in KPS, they went into hiding.68 When UNAMET officials discussed the militia attacks with their Indonesian counterparts, the Indonesians consistently presented the militia actions as responses to pro-independence violence. Next, the militia were represented as Pam Swakarsa; i.e. government-funded community self-defence groups.69 From August 1999, the Indonesian authorities insisted that the militias be called PPI (Pasukan Perjuangan Integrasi, Fighters for Integration Force, cf. Ch. 14), as they had by this time “mysteriously evolved into a guerrilla army that … had formed ‘spontaneously’ to fight for integration.”70

Local non-governmental organizations in Dili estimated the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to be in the tens of thousands by mid-June, the majority in and around Dili and in the western districts of East Timor.71 Local people in Liquica told British newspaper The Independent on 16 June that the militias were threatening to transport refugees across the border into Indonesian West Timor where they would be unable to vote. “Every night these militia men warn us all not to choose independence,” said one man. “They say that the Westerners will only stay for two months, so we must not choose independence. If we do, they will finish all of us - children, old men, all.”72

UNAMET managed to arrange a meeting in Jakarta on 18 June, where Gusmão and Leandro Isaac for the CNRT and Falintil, and Domingos Soares of the FDPK, and João

66 Martin & Mayer-Rieckh, op. cit, p. 130.
69 Martin, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
70 Helene van Klinken, ´Taking the Risk, Paying the Price: East Timorese Vote in Ermera`. In Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Vol. 32, Nos. 1 and 2. Cedar Michigan: BCAS, 2000, p. 28. While serving as an UNAMET Political Affairs officer during the latter half of 1999, van Klinken on several occasions observed the close links between TNI and the militias. A typical Indonesian military post at the time was manned by four Indonesian officers and about ten East Timorese TNI members. A group of about twenty militia was also stationed at each post. When Unamet staff visited villages, the militia would hide, but their presence was always indicated in secret by the local people (Ibid.)
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Tavares as ‘Commander-in-Chief of the Pro-Integration Forces’ signed an appeal to supporters of both sides that they cease all acts of violence and surrender all types of weapons to the authorities. Gusmão made clear that the mechanism for overseeing the disarmament process required UN involvement, and that the TNI must be confined to barracks. On the other hand, Tamrat Samuel, who represented UNAMET at the meeting, reported an unmistakable effort on the part of the TNI and pro-autonomy representatives to side-line the UN and to avoid any commitment that would restrict the TNI presence in East Timor.73

On 18 June 1999, Kiki Syahnakri, Zacky Makarim and Tono Suratman met with several of the militia leaders at the East Timor military headquarters (Korem 164), in Dili. The meeting led to the development of two contingency plans. The first aimed to derail the vote through coordinated violence. The second plan was prepared in case the vote were to be held and went against Indonesia. This entailed involving the militias in a rejection of the results and in a making of demands that East Timor be partitioned, with the western districts remaining with Indonesia. Additional measures called for the forced relocation of the local population across the border into West Timor.74

On 22 June, the UN Secretary-General proposed a two-week postponement of the popular consultation to 21 August, owing to both the security and the logistical constraints. Also on 22 June, a new umbrella organisation for autonomy groups was launched, when the two pro-autonomy groups, the FPDK and the BRTT, came together in the FBOTT (Front Bersama Pro Otonomi Timor Timur, or UNIF, United Front for East Timor Autonomy.) Domingos Soares as outward spokesman for FBOTT at the time denied that the actions of the militias had been a factor behind the delay. “The source of the conflict is not the militias. It’s more the other side,” said Mr Soares, referring to Falintil, He also accused UNAMET of not being neutral.75

Not to be outdone by the political front FBOTT, the various militias were soon loosely brought together as the PPI (Pasukan Pejuang Integrasi, Fighters for Integration Force), with João Tavares, as their Panglima Perang (War Commander).76

While discussions regarding the postponement lingered on, delegations from pro-integration and pro-independence groups met in Jakarta between 25-30 June in what was

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73 Martin, op. cit., p. 71.
75 Tjitske Lingsma, 'Opposition to UN team increases after delay in voting.' The Irish Times, June 24, 1999.
76 Crouch, op. cit., p. 151.
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called the Dare II Peace and Reconciliation Meeting. The location allowed the participation of Gusmão, and the Indonesian government also issued visas to pro-independence exiles from Mozambique, Portugal and Australia. This resulted in emotional meetings between Gusmão, Ramos Horta and others, who hadn’t seen each other since 1975. The delegations eventually agreed on a statement of “points of convergence,” including disarmament of the militias and of Falintil and respect for the outcome of the popular consultation.

During the postponement talks and the Dare II meetings, there were militia attacks on the UNAMET regional office in Maliana, on a humanitarian convoy in Liquica and threats against UNAMET staff in Viqueque. It was obvious that the security situation would never confirm to the requirements laid down by the Secretary-General. At the same time, there was now a window of opportunity which might close forever if proceedings were not continued. For one thing, the prospect of a victory for the nationalist Megawati Sukarnoputri in the upcoming Indonesian presidential election might put the whole process in jeopardy. Megawati argued that Habibie’s decision to allow a ballot in East Timor went beyond his authority as a transitional president; that it opened the door to national disintegration and exposed the country to foreign interference and humiliation. Xanana Gusmão was at all times convinced that the East Timorese would defy intimidation and, given the opportunity, would vote as they wished. Also, the UN would not easily let ‘the biggest blot on UN history,’ i.e. the manipulated ‘act of self-determination’ in West Irian in 1969 be repeated, especially so after the more recent UN fiascos in Bosnia and Rwanda.

On July 14, still one more meeting between a high representative of the US Pacific Fleet and top TNI brass took place in Jakarta. Admiral Archie Clemens, according to both Indonesian officers who were present and Clemens’ own presentation notes for the meeting, then stated that the US goals for the Asia-Pacific region depended on the maintaining of a US - Indonesian strategic partnership. This contradicted the US State Department and the White House, who were now publicly threatening to cut off the Indonesian army because of militia terror. As events were soon to prove, the international community seriously underestimated the extent to which the Indonesian forces opposed to East Timor’s separation were prepared to go. Conversely, the latter did not expect the international community, and particularly those Western countries with traditionally close ties to Indonesia, to apply military and financial sanctions and deploy a multinational force. A clear mutual understanding of intentions and attitudes at an early stage might have dissuaded those organizing and conducting the upcoming reign of terror. The signals sent by Blair and Clemens did nothing to clarify to the Indonesian side the increasing readiness to intervene in East Timor by former allies such as the US and Australia.

77 Niner, op. cit., p. 195.
78 Martin, op. cit., p. 68.
80 Samuel, op. cit., p. 199.
81 Ibid, p. 204.
82 Martin & Mayer-Rieckh, op. cit p. 129.
83 The United Nations had suffered a severe loss of face following its inaction in April-July 1994, when one million Hutus fell victims to the Tutsi majority in Rwanda. This was followed up by a tragically weak performance in Bosnia in July 1995, when some 8,000 Muslim boys and men were massacred by Serbian military and para-military in the UN-proclaimed ‘safe area’ of Srebrenica. Thus, the UN arranged referendum in East Timor was a badly needed success story for many of the actors involved.
85 Samuel, op. cit., p. 199.
In July 1999, a document was leaked from Indonesian Government sources, written by Major General H. R. Garnadi. Known as the Garnadi report, it was a general assessment of the situation in Timor, concluding that the outcome of the ballot might well be in favour of independence. The document also outlined large-scale planning for mass evacuations from Timor and the destruction of facilities in the wake of withdrawal and the continuation of Indonesian military support of pro-integration forces.86

The popular consultation

On 16 July, the delayed voter registration finally began at the 200 designated sites. When registration closed on 6 August, 446,666 people had registered. When all checks had been completed, the total would rise to 451,792.

And the Indonesian police kept pouring in. The number increased from about 3000 to 8000 from June to August, many of them paramilitary riot police, Brimob (Brigade Mobil, the Mobile Brigade.) In major Indonesian cities, Brimob had been responsible for much of the brutality against peaceful protesters, a role that they replicated in East Timor. Wiranto told Ian Martin and Francesc Vendrell that if Falintil surrendered its weapons to the Indonesian police, he guaranteed that the militia would be disarmed within two days. Gusmão asked the UNAMET to define a body, other than Indonesian police, that would supervise and monitor such a process, but was informed that this was beyond UNAMET’s mandate. Gusmão decided instead to order a unilateral cantonment of Falintil forces in four different sites. Militia leaders then stated that with Falintil in cantonment they were willing to lay down arms. By 12 August, Falintil had concluded their cantonment, a fact which was confirmed by visiting MLOs.87

On 9 August, leading representatives of FBOTT and the CNRT signed a proposed campaign code drafted by UNAMET, in the presence of Bishop Belo, representatives of the Indonesian Task Force, Portuguese and Indonesian observation missions, and the chief of police. The campaign code provided for the freedom for both sides to campaign without disruption or obstruction. It also required all participants to uphold the secrecy of the ballot and to accept the officially validated outcome of the popular consultation.88 In addition to the wording of the two options on the ballot paper, two symbols were chosen to further clarify the options, as many voters were illiterate. The CNRT and FBOTT both proposed symbols that made use of an outline map of East Timor with a flag planted upon it: the Indonesian flag for autonomy, and the CNRT flag for independence. Colour was added, to further clarify the issue. The questions to be put before the voters were:

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

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

86 Niner, op. cit., p. 196. See also Kingsbury, op. cit., pp. 120-121.
87 Ibid, pp. 71-73.
88 Ibid, p. 63.
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And these were the symbols:

The independence option

The autonomy option

The importance of the Lorikeet Warriors, i.e. the various youth and student groups, may be ascertained by the fact that the CNRT campaign was effectively run from the Renetil office in Dili, which during the campaign also produced the CNRT newspaper, Vox Populi, and established a radio station, Matebian Lian (Radio Matebian) in Maliana. Vox Populi reproduced speeches by CNRT leaders, and countered the (mis-)information produced by the pro-autonomy side. Vox Populi was issued every second day, and between one and three thousand copies were given out free in Dili and distributed to the districts. Radio Matebian broadcast similar material for two one-hour periods each day. The facilities of both were destroyed by militias at the end of August.89

Francesc Vendrell and Tamrat Samuel arranged a meeting with East Timorese leaders on 11 August in UN premises in Jakarta, so that Xanana Gusmão could participate. It was there decided that an East Timorese body responsible for fostering reconciliation and cooperation after the implementation of separation or autonomy would be launched on 31 August, the day after the vote.90 On the same day, two students were killed by the militia group 59/75 in Viqueque in an attack on the pro-independence DSMTT (Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa Timor Timur, Student Solidarity Council of East Timor) office. The police took no action, even though their office was only 300 meters from the police station.91

On 14 August, in a ceremony at UNAMET’s headquarters in Dili, representatives of the CNRT and FBOTT/UNIF launched the campaign, and during the following days the PPI presented and secured weapons at parades in Atabae, Cassa, Baucau and Dili. However, the number of weapons laid down was obviously only a fraction of those in possession of the militia; and unlike Falintil the militia did not remain in cantonment. Furthermore, Mahidi leader Cancio de Carvalho declared at the Cassa parade that those who chose wrongly in the ballot would suffer the consequences.92 On 18 August, an influx of militia into Maliana sparked a day of violence in which at least one student was killed and the UNAMET office was seriously threatened. In Cova Lima district, militia activities led to an increase in the number of IDPs in the church compound at Suai, and the CNRT suspended its activities there.93 CNRT offices were also attacked in Dili on 17 August, Manatuo on 19 August, and Ainaro on 21 August.

There were meetings on various levels with the aim to promote the laying down of arms. Wiranto’s intelligence adviser, Rear Admiral Yoost Mengko, Gusmão, and Ian Martin met in Jakarta in mid-August, and the two East Timorese sides came to a second meeting in Jakarta

90 Ibid, p. 69.
91 Amnesty International, 1999b, op. cit.
92 Martin, op. cit., p. 73.
93 Ibid, p. 76.
on 22 August, with their nominations for the members of the earlier proposed body, now named the East Timorese Consultative Commission. The second meeting was attended by two key militia commanders, Eurico Guterres and Joanico Cesario Belo. Guterres was participating across the table from Manuel Carrascalão, whose son was killed in the Guterres-led attack on his house on 17 April. Xanana Gusmão and the two militia leaders agreed on a meeting of four regional commanders on both sides.\(^{94}\) With less than a week to go to the ballot, UNAMET brought Taur Matan Ruak from Falintil’s cantonment to meet Indonesia’s new military commander for East Timor, Colonel Mohamad Noer Muis at UNAMET’s Dili headquarters on 24 August; UNAMET then flew Rear Admiral Mengko and two generals to meet Ruak at Uai Mori, one of the cantonment sites.

On 26 August, militia groups roamed around Dili, unhindered by Indonesian police. At least six people were killed, and the main CNRT/Remitil office was sacked and looted. On 28 August, the very last day of the campaign, militia rampaged through a village in Maliana, killing three people; and in Los Palos the pro-independence liurai was killed.

The scheduled meeting of Falintil and militia regional commanders took place on 28 August in Baucau. The commanders agreed that both the PPI and Falintil would order their forces not to carry or use weapons outside cantonment and called on the Indonesian police to arrest any of their members not obeying these orders. Falintil commanders and militia representatives embraced each other in front of the cameras of the world’s media and pledged their commitment to the agreement. The chief of police declared that anybody caught with weapons would be arrested and TNI Commander Muis promised the TNI’s full support.\(^{95}\)

On August 30, 1999, approximately 98% of all registered voters went to the polls, many of them having lined up since 4 o’clock in the morning. Already on the same afternoon, militia violence disrupted voting at the village of Ritabou, near Maliana. The village was razed, foreboding the destruction of around three-quarters of the buildings in East Timor, the killing of thousands of people and the forced movement of more than a quarter of a million people into West Timor.\(^{96}\)

The voting results were made public by Ian Martin on 4 September. When radio and television reporters translated the announcement, many wept with joy: 94,388 (21.5%) had voted in favour of autonomy, while 344,580 (78.5%) had opted for independence. There was, however, no time to celebrate for the winning side. Within an hour or so, an unprecedented campaign of killings, rape and arson was unleashed all over East Timor, as militia gangs embarked upon a scorched earth policy, Operasi Sapu Jagad II, calculated to give the impression that the destruction was the consequence of a spontaneous outpouring of anger by pro-autonomy groups. Quite to the contrary, it was a well-prepared military operation.\(^{97}\)

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\(^{94}\) It is worth noting that in the midst of all this, Xanana Gusmão sent a message of support to Polisario, the Western Sahara liberation movement. A planned referendum in Western Sahara in 1999 never came about, as Morocco, the occupying power, decided that it was too risky, and the principal external players - France and the US - believed that a loss for Morocco would destabilize the whole sub-region (Toby Shelley, *Endgame in the Western Sahara. What Future for Africa’s Last Colony?* London & New York: Zed Books, 2004.) It is also worth noting that the foreword to Shelley’s book is written by José Ramos Horta, who mentioned Western Sahara in his Nobel Prize speech and twice visited refugee camps at Tindouf, Algeria.

\(^{95}\) Martin, op. cit., pp. 76-78.

\(^{96}\) Kingsbury, op. cit., p. 112.

\(^{97}\) Sebastian, op. cit., p. 120.
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The rampage

After the announcement, the Indonesian army placed trucks around the hotel in Dili where most foreigners were staying, and armed militia men entered the foyer, unhindered by police or military. The UN staff then evacuated to the UNAMET compound, and all UN election staff from rural areas were called back to Dili after an American UN policeman was shot in the stomach on September 5. A large number of Timorese also sought shelter at the UNAMET compound, and the compound of Bishop Belo’s home. When on Sunday morning, 5 September, Belo held a mass for the crowd, militia arrived and he was forced to flee. On the evening of that day, Xanana Gusmão was visited by the British Ambassador, Robin Christopher. As they talked, Gusmão received a phone call from a group of three priests in Suai, who said they were inside the church with members of their congregation, surrounded by local militias. Militia gangs had in the preceding days rounded up people from outlying villages and brought them to Suai’s military headquarters. Father Hilario Madeira got permission for the people to move from there to the church compound. As the militia now prepared an attack on the compound, the priests knew they were about to die, but wanted to assure Gusmão that they were not afraid, because they would take with them the comfort that they had died as free men.

Gusmão then got a call from Taur Matan Ruak, the Deputy Commander of the Falintil. He reported that hundreds of people were arriving at the cantonment site, pleading with the guerillas to protect them from being raped and murdered at the hands of the militias. Xanana pleaded with him to order the men to remain where they were, and not to give the Indonesian military grounds to claim that the bloodshed and destruction was the result of a civil war. Ruak shouted that he could not hold his soldiers, and hung up. Later the same evening, after hearing that the Indonesian government was planning to free him and send him to Dili – thereby risking his life – Gusmão instead decided to accept an offer from Robin Christopher to be housed in the British Embassy in Jakarta.

As the priests had predicted, the Laksaur and Mahidi militias attacked the church compound in Suai at dawn on Monday, September 6. The attackers first fired at the people inside, then moved in with machetes. Regular members of the police and army soldiers stood outside the fence of the church compound, shooting refugees trying to flee. The attack was supervised on the ground by First Lieutenant Sugito of the Indonesian army, and by retired army Colonel Herman Seidono, the bupati of the region. After the massacre, the bodies of the dead were piled outside the church, doused with petrol and set alight.

In Balibó, close to the border with Indonesia, many of the inhabitants, anticipating violent reprisals from the militias who already ruled the town, fled to the hills immediately after the referendum. In the following days, women who had not managed to escape were lined up in the euphemistically named “kissing house” - the military’s torture chamber, with walls caked with blood of victims who were often pressed so hard against the wall that their lips and gums bled. The women were systematically raped by militias as the town was set ablaze.

For ten days, armed militia gangs and their Indonesian patrons laid siege to the UN compound in Dili. Inside were some five hundred UN staff and more than 1,500 local people.

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100 Falintil did, however, stay in cantonment during the post ballot rampage, thereby nullifying Indonesian attempts to portray the violence as a civil war between East Timorese.
102 Valpy, op. cit.
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Militia entered the Red Cross compound, where 2000 people were seeking refuge. The foreigners were taken to the beach, surrounded by army, and the East Timorese to a local police station. A great number of East Timorese were then taken to the port and transported by boat to West Timor.  

In the meantime, Ramos-Horta shuttled between New York and Washington, invoking the horrors of Rwanda whenever he could. “It was clear that people in the office of the Secretary-General and in the White House were traumatized by Rwanda,” he recalls. “So I kept repeating, ‘do you want another Rwanda in Timor? That’s what you’re going to get if you don’t act now.’” When the violence began, the BBC chartered a plane to evacuate journalists, but a few remained and used UN satellite phones to plead for outside help. A vast network of grassroots organizations around the globe kicked into gear, demanding intervention. On September 7, Annan was informed that the UN had received 60,000 e-mails regarding East Timor, a deluge of concern so great that a separate computer server had to be set up to handle the influx.

The Core Group of five countries - Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the United States - which had met roughly every week since its inception in June, now met daily with DPA and DPKO officials at the UN. It was at this point that Australian Prime Minister Howard decided to support a military intervention. He phoned US President Bill Clinton, but found that East Timor ‘was not on Clinton’s radar.’ To the surprise of many, Howard and his Foreign Minister Downer now publicly criticized the unwillingness of the United States to act forcefully in East Timor. The Portuguese Prime Minister, Antonio Guterres, also called Clinton, threatening that Portuguese troops would be pulled out of Kosovo and NATO, and he prevented US military flights from departing the Azores base.

The militias now effectively controlled the territory. At least 250,000 East Timorese were driven from their homes and shepherded to West Timor by land or sea transport, with the apparent aim of discrediting the ballot, i.e. by suggesting that the Timorese were now voting with their feet. In fact, this large scale population transfer involved a large-scale coordinated operation by all elements of the Indonesian armed forces. In Australia, the DSD (Defence Signals Directorate) picked up numerous telephone conversations between General Feisal Tanjung in Jakarta and General Anwar Zacky Makarim in Timor, discussing details about the population transfer. The intercepted intelligence also shows that Tanjung and Makarim were assisted in this by two ministers in Habibie’s government, the former generals A.M. Hendropriyono and Mohammad Yunus Yosfiiah.

The rampage also led to the destruction of up to 70% of East Timor’s infrastructure. If East Timor was to be left, it would be left with nothing. The militias and TNI forces looted anything moveable, and destroyed what was left. In the Oecusse enclave most everything was razed. In Dili, apart from the outright physical destruction of buildings, every state record of

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108 Cotton, op. cit., p. 95. ANZUS (The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty) is the 1951 collective security agreement which binds Australia and New Zealand and, separately, Australia and the United States, to co-operate on military matters in the Pacific Ocean region. The treaty was one of the series that the United States formed in the 1949-55 era as part of its collective response to the threat of communism during the Cold War.
109 Braithwaite, Carlesworth & Soares, op. cit., p. 98.
property deeds, tax, marriages, courts etc. was destroyed. In the western Bobonaro district, hundreds of youths and students had arrived to campaign for independence; sixty-two of them were killed by militias during September alone. Apparently, even high-ranking members of the Indonesian government were now appalled by the situation in Timor Timur. In an interview in Jakarta Post, 2 November 1999, Foreign Minister Alatas said of the violence that "it shocked the world, it shocked us too frankly." On 6 September – while the church massacre at Suai was taking place - Jamsheed Marker met Alatas and Habibie in Jakarta, and in vain tried to persuade them to invite an international force. Kofi Annan warned in New York that ‘the international community will have to consider what other measures it can take if Indonesia fails to bring the situation under control within 48 hours’. General Wiranto ordered six Kostrad battalions to go to East Timor, and persuaded President Habibie to introduce martial law in East Timor at midnight on 6-7 September. Martial law administrator, responsible directly to General Wiranto was Kiki Syahnakri.

Pro-integration militia leaders were then called to a meeting with Major General Adam Damiri in Bali, after which Halilintal leader João Tavares announced that all operations ceased on 9 September. Wiranto himself met Aitarak leader Eurico Guterres and East Timor’s Governor, José Osorio Abilio Soares, in Dili on 11 September and reiterated that all activities which ‘ruin the good name of East Timor’ should stop. As the UN began planning to evacuate its staff from East Timor, the question arose about what to do with the circa 400 local staff and the more than 1,000 East Timorese refugees at the UNAMET compound in Dili? Standard UN procedure had hitherto been to evacuate only international staff from dangerous trouble spots. The UN in New York now made an initial decision to evacuate both local and international staff, but leave the non-UN East Timorese refugees to their fate. After strong protests from UNAMET, and a survey that showed that the great majority of the staff volunteered to stay with the East Timorese, the decision was reversed. On September 13, the United Nations evacuated its besieged headquarters in Dili, except for a dozen military liaison officers who moved to the Australian consulate. The staff, numbering 74, the East Timorese, all in all 1,454, and one British journalist, were taken under heavy guard to board 5 Australian and one New Zealand Hercules transport planes to Darwin, where the East Timorese were housed in a tent city. Militia entered the evacuated UN compound in Dili and looted what was left.

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112 Braithwaite, Carlesworth & Soares, op. cit., p. 98.
117 According to Alan Nairn in a radio interview just before he was deported from East Timor on 15 September 1999, the Aitarak militia were operating out of the Korem 164 headquarters which Kiki Syahnakri was using as a base for the martial law command. Nairn added it was obvious that the militias were working closely with Kiki Syahnakri ( ‘PM’ ABC Radio National, Australia, 15 September 1999.)
118 Kompas, Jakarta, 12 September 1999, quoted in Crouch, op. cit., p. 177.
119 Ibid.
120 Robinson 2010, op. cit., p. 60.
121 Power, op. cit., p. 295.
122 Keith B. Richburg, ‘UN Staff Flees East Timor’, Washington Post, September 19, 1999(b), see also Smith & Dee, op. cit., p. 44.
Indonesia yields to international pressure

By now the international condemnation – fed by newspaper reports and television broadcasts throughout the world – was putting enormous pressure on the Indonesian government. Adding to the media pressure was now the Catholic Church. Long known for its caution on matters regarding East Timor, the Vatican now took on a highly visible role. When Bishop Belo fled the militia interrupting his mass in Dili, he turned up in Darwin two days later. From Darwin he continued to the Vatican to meet with Pope John Paul II, and give an account of the violent developments in East Timor. The Pope responded to the plight of East Timor with several sharply worded statements in September 1999. More worldly powers, such as the IMF (the International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank, also expressed their concern about the situation in East Timor and threatened to cut off credits of more than 1 billion dollars per month to Indonesia, which the country had been dependent upon since the 1997 financial crisis.

The UN Security Council sent a five-member mission to Jakarta where they met with Habibie, Alatas, Wiranto, presidential hopeful Megawati Sukarnoputri and Xanana Gusmão. The mission bluntly informed General Wiranto that they could not accept his assertion that the TNI was doing everything possible to end the rampage, and insisted that he accompany them on their visit to Dili. The UN mission also visited Dili on 11 September in the company of General Wiranto. They were amazed by the destruction, and recommended that an international force be sent to East Timor ‘without delay.’ It also recommended that ‘apparent abuses of international humanitarian law’ be investigated. Wiranto himself was visibly shocked, and this was when he decided that he could no longer withstand world pressure for international intervention.

The APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation) held a summit in Auckland, New Zealand, between 9 and 13 September. APEC had previously resisted moving its agenda beyond strictly economic issues, but this time proved to be different. José Ramos Horta had travelled to Auckland, eager not to miss a chance to inform about the dire situation in East Timor. He recalls hearing US President Clinton live from Washington, ahead of his departure to Auckland, saying that Indonesia must invite the international community to intervene. Horta ascribes the change of mind by Clinton re a military intervention in Timor to

…the power of public opinion. Because it was the people who went to the phones, to the Internet, to the fax machines, sending a barrage of messages into Bill Clinton’s office, to the US State Department, to Tony Blair and Robin Cook in London, and to the French … In Australia tens of thousands were demonstrating. In Portugal over a million people demonstrated. And that made Clinton lead a charge to rescue the people of East Timor, and also showed that when the US wants to use its power effectively for good, it can prevail. I am prepared to forgive the US for all the sins of the past after this courageous leadership by Clinton.

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124 Huntley & Hayes, op. cit., pp. 174-175.
125 Samuel, op. cit., p. 216.
126 Crouch, op. cit., p. 178
127 Kingbury, op. cit., p. 123.
The Australian government announced on 10 September 1999 that it was cancelling three joint Australia-Indonesia military training exercises and announced a review of all aspects of the defence relationship, and a plan to ban wheat exports to Indonesia. President Clinton announced the suspension of US military sales to Indonesia, as did Great Britain. General Henry Shelton, US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, telephoned General Wiranto, and this time the message was clear, unlike when Wiranto earlier spoke to US Admirals Blair and Clemens. Shelton strongly urged Wiranto to stop the militia or accept an international force. In New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on 11 September that Indonesia would be responsible for ‘crimes against humanity’ if it did not immediately accept the dispatch of foreign troops. That same day, Horta met with US President Clinton, and afterwards phoned Xanana Gusmão and told him he was assured that a peacekeeping would soon be a reality. On the evening of 12 September, Indonesia finally yielded to the massive pressure and agreed to accept the deployment of an international peacekeeping force in East Timor.129

InterFET

On 15 September 1999, the UN unanimously adopted Resolution 1264, thereby authorising the establishment of InterFET (International force for East Timor.) Australia volunteered to lead the force, on condition that this was accepted by Indonesia, and the resolution welcomed this offer of leadership.130 Indonesia, however, was strongly opposed to Australian leadership, wanting as much Asian participation as possible and a force commander from an ASEAN country. The problem was that the ASEAN states from the first day of the invasion in December 1975 had supported Indonesia’s incorporation of East Timor, and at the APEC summit, ASEAN foreign ministers initially refused to participate in a meeting on the East Timor crisis convened by the host, Prime Minister Jenny Shipley.131

The inaction of the ASEAN states ceded this leadership opportunity to Australia, a leadership which Australia considered essential, as the country was to make the largest contribution to the force.132 Indonesian consented to Australian leadership of the force on 16 September.133 Thailand had by then agreed to provide a large contingent and the Deputy Force Commander. InterFET had three specified tasks: to restore peace and security in East Timor, to protect and support UNAMET in carrying out its tasks and to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations.134 Again, the earlier mentioned trust fund facilitated the establishment of the force and its fast deployment in East Timor.

InterFET was commanded by Australian Major-General Peter Gosgrove, who arrived in East Timor on 19 September, to assure his Indonesian counterpart that InterFET did not want to get into a conflict with the Indonesian force. Troops began to land on the 20th. On September 21, while InterFET was still landing troops in Dili, Sander Thoenes, a Dutch journalist, was killed in Dili by gunmen wearing Indonesian army uniforms. Investigators concluded that the murder was probably committed by members of Battalion 745, since they had left their “signature” by slicing off Thoenes’ left ear.135

While the United States did not send combat troops to InterFET, it still played an essential role in the intervention. A US navy helicopter carrier with 900 marines, plus a navy cruiser,
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were sent to the waters near Timor, and it was made clear to the Indonesians that if they attacked InterFET, the United States would activate these forces. At its peak, InterFET comprised 11,000 troops from 22 countries, of which around 5,000 were Australian. Logistics support was provided by strategic air and sea lift, principally from Darwin, by a number of coalition partners, but principally by Australia and the United States. Portugal made a significant contribution with the positioning of a Hercules C130 aircraft and a naval surface combatant at Darwin.

On 27 September 1999 Kiki Syahnakri formally handed over security control in East Timor to InterFET commander Cosgrove and withdrew to Bali, where he replaced Adam Damiri as Udayana regional military commander. Over a period of six weeks, InterFET then extended its presence to every district, following an ‘oil spot’ strategy of expanding operations from secured locations. A lack of co-ordination between TNI and InterFET was evident in the initial phase. Some TNI units co-operated with InterFET, while others did not, seemingly acting on the initiative of the local commander rather than on central direction. TNI were well aware of InterFET rules of engagement, which prevented either militia or TNI being engaged unless under the provision that they did not act aggressively towards InterFET or the local population. TNI on numerous occasions took militia under their protection to prevent InterFET detaining or engaging them. During the last weeks of September a mass exodus of TNI and militia occurred from East to West, with militia exiting East Timor under the protection and control of any TNI unit that would protect them. In the border areas, local populations were herded across the border to West Timor by the militias. When InterFet reached Balibó, the burnt out town was empty, save for an elderly woman who had lost her mind and roamed the streets, talking to herself.

The only direct clash between InterFET and TNI occurred on 10 October outside the village of Motain on the East-West Timor border, in which the Indonesian side sustained two casualties, one of which later proved fatal. The militias fled East Timor, and re-established themselves in refugee camps in West Timor. Oecusse was the final district to be secured, on 22 October 1999, and by November 1, all TNI troops had left East Timor.

While the liberation of East Timor can be seen as a happy ending to the combined UNAMET and InterFET missions, it also shows that this could have been accomplished many years earlier. The violence could now be stopped for the same reason that it had been allowed to continue since 1975; i.e. because it had rested on the complicity of powerful states. Regarding the more recent period, Tamrat Samuel has argued that measures such as the suspension of arms sales by the United States and the United Kingdom, suspension of discussions on an economic bailout by the IMF and linkage of a World Bank loan to the situation in East Timor could have either been adopted before the vote or used as threats if the Indonesian government failed to take the agreed steps to ensure security in the region. In addition, clear warnings about the possibility of senior officials being held responsible for crimes against humanity could have sent a powerful message. It has also been argued, for instance by Hugh White, Deputy Secretary for Strategy in the Australian Department of Defence in 1999, that Australia could have pushed much harder and much earlier – such as during the tripartite negotiations in April 1999 - for the presence of UN military peacekeepers.

137 Smith & Dee, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
140 United Nations, Letter dated 8 November 1999 from the permanent representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. S/1999/1146
in light of the available intelligence on the likelihood of mass destruction and mass violence. The argument against this is, as mentioned above, that such an action might have put the whole process in jeopardy.

Two parallel investigations

Shortly after the arrival of InterFET in East Timor, and foregoing the result of discussions at the UN - where the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, former Irish President Mary Robinson, vowed to pursue those responsible for the recent terror - the Habibie Government on 22 September 1999 decreed to set up an Ad Hoc Human Rights Court for East Timor, and gave approval to Komnas HAM (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, National Commission on Human rights) to form KPP HAM (Komisi Penyelidik Pelanggaran Hak Asasi Manusia) a Commission of inquiry into human rights violations in East Timor. The Commission - consisting of five members of Komnas HAM and four independent human rights advocates - was mandated to assemble information and search for evidence in relation to violations of human rights that occurred in East Timor between January and October 1999, and to formulate the results as basis for prosecutions in the Ad Hoc Human Rights Court.

In New York, on September 27, a resolution was adopted by a special session of the UN’s Commission of Human Rights (UNCHR) to set up an International Commission of Inquiry in East Timor (ICIET) to investigate possible violations of human rights and acts which may constitute breaches of international humanitarian law committed in East Timor since January 1999. As a compromise with Indonesia, the UNCHR resolution stipulated that the international commission of inquiry should work in cooperation with the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights. The resolution also affirmed that ‘the primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice rests with national justice systems’. The UNCHR resolution also provided for three UN Special rapporteurs, dealing with extra-judicial killings, torture and violence against women, and the UN Working Group onDisappearances to conduct investigations in East Timor. The scene was thus set for two parallel investigations, one domestic Indonesian and one international.

Gusmão in - Habibie out

On 7 September, the Indonesian authorities released Xanana Gusmão from his house arrest, and he moved with his Los Palos bodyguards to the British Embassy. It was here that he received the phone call from José Ramos Horta in Auckland, and two days after learned that Indonesia had formally accepted an international peacekeeping force to be deployed to East Timor. The decision was now made to move to a place from which he could partake in a more active way in politics. On the evening of 18 September, Gusmão was followed to the Jakarta international airport by the British and Australian ambassadors and the Indonesian Minister of Justice. A few hours later, he and his crew arrived at Darwin, Australia, where he teamed up with CNRT officials who had established a base there. Among them was Roque Rodrigues, now designated chief-of-staff of CNRT. A few days of consultations with the evacuated staff

144 Ibid, p. 56.
145 Roque Rodrigues, a long-time member of the Fretilin’s external delegation in Mozambique, was close to Xanana Gusmão, and had been appointed Representative for the CNRT in Portugal in 1998.
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of UNAMET and international NGOs followed, plus a visit to the site where hundreds of East Timorese refugees were temporarily housed.

Then followed a couple of weeks of intense flying, worthy of a major rock star promoting a new album. Gusmão and Kirsty Sword left Darwin on 25 September, on a long flight to New York, via Sydney and Los Angeles. In New York, there was a tight five-day schedule, including meetings with Constâncio Pinto, representatives of the DPKO (the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations), Kofi Annan and Madeleine Albright. In new York, he also met up with José Ramos Horta, and the two attended a meeting at the UN to discuss post-referendum issues with the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, and the Foreign Ministers of New Zealand and Australia. Gusmão and Horta expressed their opinion that as the people of East Timor had voted for independence under the flag of CNRT, the CNRT had earned the right to participate actively in the transition. In the 1960s and 1970s, national liberation movements from countries such as Namibia (SWAPO) and South Africa (ANC) had been recognized by the UN as legitimate representatives of the people, without their having been elected in those territories, and Horta emphasized at the press conference which followed the meeting, that in similar fashion the CNRT now expected to be consulted at every level in the transition period. Far from everyone subscribed to this view in the UN building, as we shall soon see, and particularly not so among policy makers within the DPKO.

On 29 September Gusmão continued to Washington DC, where he appeared at the World Bank, in front of finance ministers from all over the world. From Washington, Gusmão and Sword were taken on the Portuguese Government’s jet to Lisbon for a three-day visit, then on to Dublin for meetings with the Prime Minister and the President. Next was London, and meetings with Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. The tour ended back in Darwin on 6 October.

During the Gusmão ‘tour of the world’, and the weeks following, a number of CNRT leaders and representatives from Timor, Europe and Australia arrived in Darwin. They assembled and consulted 16-21 October 1999, after which they announced the formation of a number of CNRT bodies, including a Transitional Council, to be the central CNRT body for the transition period to independence, and principal dialogue partner with UNTAET. The Transitional Council was to be composed of Xanana Gusmão, Taur Matan Ruak, José Ramos Horta, Mari Alkatíri, João Carrascalão, Avelino Coelho and Felicidade Guterres, and premises for the Transitional Council were being equipped in Aileu.

Other CNRT bodies established in Darwin were a National Emergency Commission, with Agio Pereira as General Coordinator, with responsibility for CNRT activity in respect of the current emergency situation in Timor - both humanitarian and rehabilitation of infrastructure, a Research and Planning Commission, a Public Service Committee, a Team to elaborate on National Development Policy, a Foreign Affairs Commission (with José Ramos Horta continuing in his role as CNRT roving ambassador) and a Gender Equity Committee, created to uphold the rights of women, as established in the CNRT Magna Carta from Peniche.

Roque Rodrigues, who at the Fretilin External Delegation meeting in Lisbon in August 1993 replaced Abílo Araújo as Fretilin (and later CNRT) representative for Portugal and Europe, was now himself replaced in that position by Pasqoela Rodrigues, albeit for a different reason, as he was now appointed Chief-of-Staff of CNRT.

Apart from the formal meetings in which the above commissions were established, there was also, according to João Carrascalão, a closed-door meeting, where Xanana Gusmão proposed, and Ramos-Horta and Mário Carrascalão supported, the dissolution of the political

147 Babo Soares 246- 247).
148 Pat Walsh, From opposition to proposition: The National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) in transition, ACFOA, 8 November 1999.
parties Fretilin and UDT in order to put to rest East Timor’s oft-violent political past and thereby create the space for a new political era. João Carrascalão and Mari Alkatiri, representing UDT and Fretilin respectively, rejected the idea. As Awet Tewelde Weldemichael sees it, their refusal was due to the fact that Gusmão, Horta and Mário Carrascalão all had a high political profile in East Timor, and in all likelihood would be able to operate within new party constellations; whereas João Carrascalão and Mari Alkatiri, both quite unknown entities to an increasingly young electorate in East Timor, were in greater relative need of their historic party platforms.¹⁴⁹

On 22 October 1999, Xanana Gusmão was flown in an Australian military aircraft to Dili, where he was installed at a heavily guarded beachside compound. He immediately met with Falintil commanders, including Taur Matan Ruak and Leandro Isaac, and was the following morning taken by troop carrier through a burnt out Dili. Flanked by Taur Matan Ruak, he held an improvised speech from the second floor of the old government building, in front of crying people: “They have left us with nothing … we will rebuild our city, our homeland, our lives … we are not dogs, but people.” He pleaded for all Timorese to return home, to forgive and to rebuild. It was, in the words of Sara Niner, “public emotional healing at its most raw.”¹⁵⁰ Loudspeaker trucks drove through the city streets announcing the homecoming of the 53-year-old guerilla chief. Later that day, Gusmão and Sword were taken by helicopter to Remexio, some 15 kilometres from Aileu, one of the four cantonment sites where Falintil had relocated to upon InterFET’s arrival.¹⁵¹ They were greeted by Falintil troops standing to attention. The Falintil flag was raised, and a chorus of young girls sang the Falintil anthem as Gusmão inspected the troops. Xanana then addressed the men and women of Falintil, and spoke of the memory of their fallen comrades, the difficulties of the struggle, and the long years in the hills. Then followed a welcoming party with traditional food and dresses, and everybody finally linked together in the tebe procession dance, chanting and stamping in unison.¹⁵²

Xanana Gusmão and Taur Matan Ruak, Remexio, October 24, 1999.
Photo: AP/Charles Dharapak.

¹⁵¹ Smith & Dee, op. cit., pp. 49-50.
¹⁵² Kirsty Sword Gusmão with Rowena Lennox, A Woman of Independence. Sydney: Macmillan, 2003, pp. 239-271. The other cantonment sites were Poetete, near Ermera, Aiassa, in the Bobonaro district, and Atelari, southeast of Baucau.
And Habibie’s career as top politician was over. Indonesia’s reputation was damaged, its armed forces humiliated. In Jakarta, much of the blame for all this fell on President Habibie. At the MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, The People's Consultative Assembly) general session on 14 October 1999, Habibie delivered an accountability speech, a report of what he had achieved during his presidency. MPR members then voted to decide whether they would accept or reject his speech. It was rejected by 355 votes to 322, and Habibie announced the withdrawal of his nomination for the forthcoming presidential election. The reversal of the Indonesian Statutory Law No. 7 of 17 July 1976, through which East Timor had been incorporated into Indonesia as its twenty-seventh province, was then passed unanimously by the MPR on 19 October 1999.\(^\text{153}\) By that time, Xanana had visited the other three cantonment sites, and had also made a tour of district and sub-district centres, at all places being celebrated in similar style as in Remexio. By mid-November, Falintil had also relocated most (but not all, as we shall soon see) troops to a single cantonment in Aileu. A new chapter was about to be written in the history of East Timor.

\(^{153}\) Crouch, op. cit., p. 179.
Chapter 15. The UNTAET interregnum

UNTAET arrives in East Timor

UNAMET’s mission, to administer a popular consultation in East Timor, was accomplished. UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor), with the overall task of administering East Timor until the territory achieved independence, was established on 25 October 1999, by UN Security Council Resolution 1272 (1999.) Under its mandate, the broadest in the history of the United Nations, UNTAET acted as the de jure transitional government of the territory, with executive, legislative, and judicial authority. On 20 October 1999, Portugal’s ambassador had informed UN officials that Portugal would relinquish its legal ties to East Timor and consider UNTAET its successor with the passage of the Security Council mandate.¹

The planning of UNTAET took place in the context of an internal UN bureaucratic power struggle, between the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The DPA had been in charge of the negotiations leading to the referendum, as well as the mission (UNAMET) that organized it, and had developed considerable expertise about East Timor. The DPKO, however, maintained that with the deployment of international troops, InterFET, the mission should be moved to its departmental jurisdiction. In mid-September, the Secretary-General’s office finally decided that the DPKO was to be in charge.

The CNRT had by then produced a detailed plan for the transition to independence, envisaging a two-month period during which a Timorese Emergency Committee would work with international relief agencies to handle the humanitarian emergency. After this a transitional Timorese government would be formed to oversee the drafting and approval of a provisional constitution. Presidential and legislative elections would be held in August 2001. Independence would be declared in October 2001 and a final constitution would be approved by January 2002. The plan was ignored by the DPKO. Also ignored was Ian Martin’s plea to move the planning base to Darwin, Australia, so that Gusmão and other Timorese leaders could be consulted. Since most of the planners had never visited East Timor, they had no feel for Gusmão’s extraordinary popularity, nor did they have much knowledge of the CNRT.²

UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo), had been established in June 1999, and was basically used as a role model for East Timor.³ Brazilian diplomat Sergio Vieira de Mello, experienced from the Kosovo mission, was placed in charge as Special Representative (SRSG) of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. UNTAET was made up of three ‘pillars’:

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1. Governance and Public Administration (GPA), responsible for re-establishing governance, and for regenerating public and social utilities, to establish the rule of law, and to encourage and regulate investment in the private sector.4
2. Humanitarian and emergency rehabilitation, with the responsibility of coordinating relief and humanitarian organizations.
3. A military component.

Unlike UNMIK, UNTAET lacked a fourth, separate pillar for institution building, which in this case was seen as part of the responsibilities of the GPA. At a donor’s meeting in Tokyo, 16-17 December 1999, a total of US$ 520 million was pledged by participating nations for emergency and state-building activities. The money, channeled through the World Bank, was to oversee the funding and design of the various projects.5 All funds were in the form of grants, not loans. The recipient of the funds, as the legal governing authority of the territory, was UNTAET.6

UNTAET – an uneasy beginning

Sergio Vieira de Mello commenced duties as Transitional Administrator in Dili on 17 November 1999, inheriting a small number of experienced UNAMET personnel. InterFET provided security until arrangements for a UN Peace-Keeping Force (PKF) were finalized. De Mello’s first move was to travel to Aileu – where CNRT had established headquarters - to contact Xanana Gusmão, rather than wait for the local hero to turn up in Dili. Xanana was pleased to be able to converse in Portuguese, and they had a friendly initial meeting. The following evening, Xanana received a phone call saying that a group of Falintil soldiers, on their way from the Bobonaro cantonment to Aileu, had been stopped and disarmed by InterFET soldiers in Dili. A furious Gusmão travelled the next morning from Aileu towards Dili in a convoy of four vehicles. They were stopped by an InterFET roadblock, where Major-General Cosgrove pleaded with Xanana not to continue with his action. Gusmão refused to talk to Cosgrove unless it was at the UN compound in Dili, and continued on foot with his men. Upon arrival, Xanana outlined the incident to the UNTAET head. Cosgrove turned up at the office and explained that there had been a misunderstanding on the part of InterFET. Xanana was satisfied with this; the two men shook hands and there were no hard feelings afterwards.

Once the air had been cleared between the two commanders, Sergio Vieira de Mello discussed with Xanana Gusmão the mechanism for East Timorese participation in the UN transitional administration. While the UN Security Council’s resolution of 25 October had granted fairly sweeping powers to Sergio as the Transitional Administrator, UNTAET’s principal role was to prepare the East Timorese for self-government, and it was necessary to include them in the decision-making.7 The question was how inclusive, and in what form? Vieira de Mello clearly had a problem to deal with here, reconciling the directions inherent in his mandate with realities on the ground in East Timor. The UN directives were built on an

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5 The World Bank has come under frequent criticism over the years for insufficient transparency, for its funding of environmentally- and socially destructive projects, and for providing loans to repressive governments. The World Bank’s long relationship with Suharto’s Indonesia is but one example. Indonesia was one of the Bank’s largest recipients of funding, despite the Suharto regime’s horrific human rights record and endemic corruption.
7 Sword Gusmão & Lennox, op. cit., pp. 289-293.
impartiality principle, where CNRT was regarded as just another political party and was going to be treated as such, without recognition of CNRT as “a distinctive creature, requiring a different approach.” Officials in New York also urged him to treat Gusmão as the head of one party among many but, as Samantha Powers has noted, “it did not take Gallup pollsters or a formal election to confirm Gusmão’s hallowed local status.” For most East Timorese, Xanana Gusmão was their moral leader, not only the president of CNRT. He was also their Maun Boot, older brother. Whatever arrangement was made with the UNTAET, all Timorese assumed that Gusmão would be recognized as the supreme authority in the newly liberated state. As José Ramos Horta remarked, “imagine a transition in South Africa, where Mandela wasn’t given the ultimate authority.”

Many of UNTAET’s key staff and its logistic support did not arrive until the early months of 2000, and when they did arrive, most were retained in Dili. Due to the large-scale militia destruction of Dili, two cruise ships, the Olympia and Amos W, were moored in Dili harbor to provide accommodation for the growing number of UN officials. Looking like luxury liners, and with a blaring disco on one of them, the ships were deemed offensive by many locals. Further compounding the difficulties, some twenty-five of the thirty-seven remaining UNAMET staff had by the end of November 1999 refused to renew their contracts, due to strained relations with the new leadership.

The return of refugees

Even before Sergio Vieira de Mello arrived in Timor, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) had begun to arrange the return of refugees from West Timor. The early start was due to the organization having established a presence in Timor already in May 1999, to provide protection to IDP’s (Internally Displaced Persons.) During the first half of October, 2000 refugees had been returned by UNHCR-arranged flights from Kupang, and negotiations were underway with Indonesian authorities for the return of refugees by road. On 14 October 1999, UNHCR and the Indonesian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which gave Indonesia overall responsibility for the safety and care of East Timorese refugees and provided assurances of the security of UNHCR staff. Following this initial MOU, an agreement with the aim to step up repatriation of refugees was signed on 22 November in the border town of Motain by representatives of InterFET and the Indonesian military. The signing was witnessed by Richard Holbrooke, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, and Stanley Roth, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, signaling to all parties involved that the US still stood behind the result of the referendum. 126,000 people returned during October – December 1999, with numbers reaching over 6,000 on some days. In the initial phase, UNHCR had no detailed policy as to the place of return in East Timor. When asked where they wanted to go, most refugees replied Dili, and were delivered there without questions, contributing to an already tense situation of overcrowding and housing conflicts in the city.

8 Fuhrke, op. cit., p. 8.
9 Power, op. cit., p. 306.
12 Ibid, p. 312.
13 Ibid, p. 988.
A National Consultative Council

During November and December 1999, UNTAET was basically an emergency humanitarian mission; providing food, basic health care and shelter to IDP’s and returning refugees. However, the lack of East Timorese political participation soon began to cause local resentment. In response, UNTAET on 2 December 1999 established the National Consultative Council (NCC), as an advisory body. The NCC consisted of fifteen members; seven from the CNRT, three representatives of pro-Indonesian groups, one from the Catholic Church, plus Vieira de Mello and three other UNTAET members. The formation of NCC led to Gusmão and his crew leaving Aileu for Dili, where they shared a building with other CNRT members who had returned from the diaspora.

Initially, de Mello issued only regulations that the entire NCC was willing to support, such as the establishing of a banking system, a civil service and a fixed currency. In the immediate post-Indonesian period, Australian dollars and US dollars were used along with Indonesian rupiahs, but UNTAET insisted on the legitimacy of just one currency, and the US dollar was established as East Timor’s official currency on January 24, 2000. While the creation of the NCC enlarged the existing, informal consultations between CNRT (read Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos Horta) and Sergio Vieira de Mello, the close partnership between UNTAET and CNRT, especially Vieira de Mello’s strong reliance on Gusmão, led to critiques of non-transparency. There were even mutterings of the territory becoming a “Xanana Republic.”

A two-track approach and a ‘clash of paradigms’

UNTAET used a ‘two-track approach’, i.e. a plan for a locally recruited civil service, separate from UNTAET’s Governance and Public Administration pillar. To do this, there was a need to first create a public service commission and a public finance infrastructure, and this was not accomplished until March 2000. Even more delayed was the implementation of the mission’s plan to create a decentralized structure, where district-level personnel would report to the district administrator, rather than to the central administration in Dili. The thirteen district administrators in April 2000 issued a memorandum of protest concerning the central administration’s ongoing failure to consult with them. Under pressure, Vieira de Mello established district advisory councils – consisting of East Timorese and UNTAET representatives - for the purpose of representing the concerns of the population and to provide advice to the district administrators. UNTAET also created DFO’s (District Field Officers), as coordinators with the sub-district level and village chiefs. The view of what constituted the right qualifications for becoming DFO’s, however, differed. From the UNTAET perspective, the appropriate qualifications were education and working experience. For the local population this contradicted with the paradigmatic principles of origin, seniority and

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leadership.\textsuperscript{18} In contrast to the DFOs, the authority of the chiefs was never questioned locally, exemplifying what Tanja Hohé labels ‘a clash of paradigms.’\textsuperscript{19}

In spite of an increasing number of East Timorese civil servants, international staff continued to dominate the administration, and only a couple of the 13 district administrators were Timorese. In May, 2000, during a meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, José Ramos Horta demanded the removal of all UNTAET district administrators and their replacement by local leaders, as well as a fixed date for the UN’s departure.\textsuperscript{20}

A dual-track economy & growing discontent

There was also a ‘dual-track economy’, a glaring contrast between the wealth of the international bureaucrats – symbolized by large cars and noisy parties aboard the Olympia - and the poverty and unemployment of the majority of the East Timorese. The need to import consumer goods and the suspension of most trade with Indonesia, meant that consumer goods became considerably more expensive relative to their pre-September 1999 cost. Between August and October 1999, the price index in Dili rose by 200 percent, and the price of manufactures rose fivefold. In the countryside, peasant families had on average lost half their livestock. All banks were either looted or destroyed, and as a result all transactions in the economy had to be carried out on a cash or barter basis. Power supply in Dili became less reliable, and much of the hinterland remained without electricity for many months. No less than 80 percent of all schools and medical clinics had been destroyed. The transport and communications network had collapsed. Unemployment was high and rising, accompanied by an increasing crime rate.\textsuperscript{21}

The feeling of euphoria and freedom after the many years of oppression, was slowly giving away to a growing sense of discontent under the rule of UNTAET. That some foreign staff exhibited colonial-style behavior, and even attempted methodically to prevent the participation of Timorese, contributed greatly to this. Jarat Chopra, head of UNTAET’s Office of District Administration until he resigned in March 2000, has written that the unprecedented powers to be assumed by the UN “attracted the very type of individual who would be intoxicated by that thought.”\textsuperscript{22} Many foreign experts also worked on fixed-term six-month contracts. Before they could grasp the complexity of East Timor’s reality, they were replaced by others, fresh out of Kosovo or Bosnia.\textsuperscript{23}

Further adding to the discontent was the inflow of East Timorese returning from Portugal, Australia and other countries, with language- and other skills that equipped them well to work with the donor community, while those who had remained in the country felt that they had a superior knowledge of the needs of their people and the social and political complexity of their country. There was also a traditional/cultural, tension between ‘rival’ generations – old

\textsuperscript{18} 49 international NGO’s arrived between September and December 1999, growing to more than 250 within two years. Their need of local partners led to an explosion of civil society organizations, mostly established by young Timorese with sufficient English language skills to cooperate with international donors. When the national NGO umbrella body, the NGO Forum, was established in 1998 it had 14 members; by 2002 there were 331.


\textsuperscript{22} Chopra, op. cit., p. 981.

\textsuperscript{23} Sword Gusmão & Lennox, op. cit., p. 302.
and new, where the old regarded the young, the \textit{labarik foinsae} (literally rising kids) as ignorant, with an inability to read the circumstances and a lack of understanding.\textsuperscript{24} In general, the youth felt that the leaders now seemed to emphasize their own political interests after independence, forgetting that the youth had contributed greatly to the struggle.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{‘Political security groups’ and kaladi-firaku hostilities}

In early 2000, East Timor saw the appearance of quasi-mystical, quasi-criminal groups, some with links back to the resistance movement. They included Sagrada Familia, based on guerrilla leader Cornelio Gama – a.k.a. L-7 – and his group around Baucau, and Colimau 2000, with its base in the Atsabe region. Such groups became focal points for anti-UN and anti-CNRT rhetoric and political activism.\textsuperscript{26} CPD-RDTL (\textit{Conselho Popular pela da Republica Democratica de Timor Leste}, Popular Council for the Defence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor) became an umbrella organization for these disaffected groups. Claiming to be the “real” Fretilin, CPD-RDTL wanted to adopt the Democratic Republic of East Timor, proclaimed on November 28, 1975, as East Timor’s official name, and to install surviving members of the original DRET administration as the current leadership of East Timor. CPD-RDTL opposed the political transition process towards an independence that, according to this view, had already been won many years ago.

Abílio de Araújo and Rogério Lobato, two former Fretilin leaders who had returned to Timor after many years in exile, publically supported CPD-RDTL, as did a loose coalition of people who had been directly or indirectly involved in Falintil’s internal conflicts in 1984 (cf. Ch. 11), including Olo Gari Aswain. Maria Ilda Conceição, the widow of Commander Kilik, publicly blamed the death of her husband on Xanana Gusmão. Spokesperson of CPD-RDTL was Cristiano da Costa, a former translator for TNI commander General Wiranto, and its ‘General Coordinator’ was Antonio Amaral da Costa a.k.a. Aitahan Matak. Paulino Gama/Mauk Moruk, who had moved to the Netherlands in the late 1980s, attempted to spread information about what he considered ‘the crimes of 1984’, in letters copied and distributed in Dili, alleging that some political leaders were criminals who ought to be brought to justice. Paulino Gama/Mauk Moruk also happened to be the brother of Sagrada Familia leader Cornelio Gama/L7.

In late December 1999, a violent fight broke out between firaku and kaladi youths at Areia Branca beach outside Dili.\textsuperscript{27} A few days later, more fighting broke out in Dili’s Mercado Lama, followed by an incident in which a number of youths were injured in Bairro Pite, traditionally a kaladi area. Dionísio Babo Soares, who at the time conducted fieldwork in East Timor for the Australian Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, recorded seven such events during December 1999-February 2000, and countless more thereafter, and not only in Dili. A riot in March 2001 destroyed most of the houses in two villages in Viqueque district.


\textsuperscript{27} At that time, the words kaladi and firaku were as often as not exchanged for the Tetun terms \textit{loromonu} and \textit{lorosa’e} (with the meanings of “sundown” and “sunrise”, i.e. western and eastern respectively). For a period, many East Timorese also referred to their country as Timor Lorosa’e, but that eventually fell out of broad usage, as it came to signify division, rather than unity (Gordon Peake & Piers Kelly, ‘What’s in a name? For the Timorese, quite a lot’. \textit{Crikey}, Melbourne, Dec. 6, 2013.) https://blogs.crikey.com.au/fullsyic/2013/12/06/whats-in-a-name-for-the-timorese-quite-a-lot/
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The situation was made worse by the sometimes involvement of former guerrilla groups, or when political party spokespersons jumped on the ethnic bandwagon and identified with either firaku or kaladi, in an attempt to attract supporters from respective groups. Already in 1994, George Aditjondro wrote of the fostering of a culture of violence in the territory as the most important indirect consequence of war. Chomsky and Herman have distinguished between the “wholesale violence” practiced by states and the “retail violence” practiced by individuals. While wholesale violence, after 1999, was a thing of the past in Dili and other towns in East Timor, due to a proliferation of martial arts groups, animosity between ethnically based gangs, and a great number of unemployed ‘young men with scars’ there now existed potential and fertile breeding-grounds for retail violence.

Those refugees who arrived back first were able to exploit the housing situation in Dili and other towns. The first-comers were mainly firaku, the majority of whom had not fled into Indonesian West Timor. This also led to violent confrontations when home owners later returned to find their properties occupied. As mentioned before, the majority of returnees from West Timor were initially sent to Dili, contributing to a situation where an estimated 50 percent of housing was before long occupied illegally. The National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional) had been destroyed by the militias and its’ records burned; leaving virtually no formal functioning way to handle conflicting land and property claims.

The UNTAET peace-keeping component. The refugee flood turns into a trickle.

The UN Peace Keeping Force Force (PKF) commander, Lieutenant Jaime de los Santos from the Philippines, was not appointed until 30 December 1999, and deployed to Dili on 25 January 2000. The transition from InterFET to the around 8,000 strong PKF was then conducted during February. Before the transition, InterFET and TNI had on 12 January 2000, reached a Memorandum of Understanding to control the border and minimize the risks of unintended conflict between the two sides. This was an elaboration of the ‘Holbrooke agreement’, in that it outlined an agreed border and established a number of junction points to facilitate refugee return. Soon after transition, the PKF was tested with militia infiltration in the border districts of Bobonaro, Cova Lima and Ermera. This was met with both political and military action. UNTAET’s Director of Political Affairs, Peter Galbraith, went to Jakarta to seek Indonesian action in stopping the incursions, and PKF patrolling was increased in the border region.

From February 2000, the return of refugees was the responsibility of IOM (International Organization of Migration) in cooperation with UNHCR. By that time, the repatriation rate had peaked, and the remaining refugees were increasingly those who had reason to fear return, or were being actively intimidated by those who had such reason. The fear was not entirely unfounded. The vast majority of those who returned did so safely, but those linked to militia groups sometimes faced mob violence. Also, members of East Timor's Muslim,
Protestant, and ethnic Chinese minorities at times found themselves persecuted because of suspected ties to the Indonesian power structure. Some 265 Indonesian Muslims remained virtually under siege in the Dili mosque to which they had fled in September 1999, and three Protestant churches were burned in Ermera and Aileu. On 6 April, 2000, another MOU ‘regarding cooperation in legal, judicial and human rights related matters’ was signed by the Indonesian Attorney-General and Sergio Vieira de Mello of UNTAET. The memorandum included an agreement for both partners ‘to transfer to each other all persons whom the competent authorities of the requesting party are prosecuting for a criminal offence or whom these parties want for the purpose of serving a sentence’. The following week, on 11 April 2000, a MOU for tactical coordination in the border area between West Timor and East Timor, was signed by the TNI and the PKF, pinpointing details of the border between East and West Timor, and aligning the locations of their respective areas of responsibility.

Apart from the series of MOU’s, there was also a number of top-level confidence building visits from both sides. An East Timorese delegation consisting of Xanana Gusmão, Avelino C oelho, Taur Matan Ruak and José Ramos-Horta visited Jakarta in November 1999, and Indonesia’s President Wahid then visited Dili in February, 2000. Agreements were signed concerning the promotion of trade and communication, the establishment of representative offices, and continued access by East Timorese to academic institutions in Indonesia. Sergio Vieira de Mell o visited Jakarta twice following Wahid’s Dili visit, an UNTAET delegation headed by Peter Galbraith met with Indonesian Government representatives in Denpasar, Bali, and Xanana Gu smão again visited Jakarta in April, 2000.

From late July through September, significant militia infiltration occurred in the Ainaro and Manufahi districts, and almost 3,000 people fled to the district capitals. The PKF, with support from Falintil (as guides and liaison officers) successfully drove out the militias. On 24 July, Leonard Manning, a New Zealand soldier, was killed during the operation. The UN Security Council condemned the killing, and called for the Government of Indonesia to take effective steps to restore law and order, and to arrest those militia who sabotaged the resettlement process. The Manning murder was followed by the killing of Nepalese soldier Devi Ram Jaisi on 10 August in Suai. Militia violence culminated in the murder of three UNHCR staff – an American, a Croat and an Ethiopian – in the West Timor border town Atambua on 6 September. All UN staff in West Timor were evacuated immediately.

The United Nations Security Council responded to the worsening situation by adopting resolution 1319 on 8 September 2000, calling on the Government of Indonesia to take immediate steps to disarm and disband militia immediately, ensure safety and security in the refugee camps, and prevent cross-border incursions into East Timor. It took the killings of Manning, Jaisi, and the three UNHCR workers, plus a strongly worded resolution from the Security Council, before the Indonesian authorities began serious action to control the
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militias. From October 2000, security operations by the TNI and POLRI (*Polisi Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian National Police) led to far fewer incidences of militia infiltration into East Timor. Considerable credit for this improved situation rested with Major General Willem da Costa, who replaced General Kiki Syahnakri as the regional commander in November 2000. Simultaneously, militia were encouraged to return to East Timor with the understanding that those responsible for serious crimes would be prosecuted at a later date, once the judicial system was functioning. The thinking was that it would be better to have them in East Timor, where it was possible to control them, rather than in West Timor, where they continued to have strong influence within their communities. UNTAET’s Chief of Staff, Malaysian diplomat Nagalingam Parameswaran, in close cooperation with Xanana Gusmão, and with the full endorsement of Sergio Vieira de Mello, took the lead on pursuing this controversial approach from October 2000 onwards, leading to critiques about militia leaders being ‘wined and dined’ on UN-sponsored visits to East Timor.

**Human rights investigations**

The five-member International Commission of Inquiry in East Timor (ICIET), set up at the UN in September 1999, visited East Timor in November/December, working in tandem with the Indonesian KPP-HAM team. Both the ICIET and the KPP-HAM reports were handed down on 31 January 2000. The ICIET found that there had been ‘gross violations of human rights and breaches of humanitarian law’, and that the Indonesian army and related militias had been involved in the violations. The report concluded that:

> Unless, in a matter of months, the steps taken by the Government of Indonesia to investigate TNI involvement in the past year’s atrocities bear fruit … the Security Council should consider the establishment of an international criminal tribunal for the purpose … preferably with the consent of the Government of Indonesia, but such consent should not be a prerequisite.

In his letter forwarding the ICIET report to the Security Council, Secretary-General Kofi Annan did not endorse the recommendation for a separate tribunal, stressing instead that full cooperation should be given to Indonesian efforts to investigate the crimes. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General dated 26 January 2000, Alwi Shihab, Indonesia’s Foreign Minister at the time had already rejected the expected recommendations for an international tribunal, à la those created for Yugoslavia and Rwanda. He was also confident that if there was a vote in the Security Council, such a proposal would be vetoed by Russia and/or China because of the precedents it could set for conflicts such as Chechnya and Tibet.

The KPP-HAM report stated that the army, police and civilian government in East Timor had provided the pro-Indonesian militia with arms, finance and training, and that individual TNI personnel had been implicated directly or indirectly in the mass killing, torture,

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40 Smith & Dee, op. cit., pp. 78-79.
42 Ibid, p. 56.
disappearances, forced evacuations and destruction. Some of the highest ranking generals in Indonesia were named as responsible, including Wiranto.45

And then there was the Dunn Report. James Dunn, the former Australian Consul in Portuguese Timor, was in October 2000 hired by Mohamed Othman, the UNTAET-appointed General Prosecutor in East Timor, to carry out an investigation about the involvement of the Indonesian military in the crimes of 1999. Dunn submitted his report to UNTAET in February 2001. Meant to be a secret report, it was obtained and published by *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, Melbourne, on April 20, 2001. The East Timor General Prosecutor distanced himself from the report, saying that it lacked hard evidence and did not reflect the position of an ongoing UN investigation, which he expected would indict as many as 400 suspects, including some top Indonesian military officers. "Making the report public has diminished its effectiveness as a legal document, as it can now be challenged for prejudicing our investigation," Othman said. He also said that the UN still hoped that Jakarta would take action, and that "we will increase the pressure on Indonesia to cooperate with our investigation".46

The Dunn report names two army officers as having played key roles: Major-General Zacky Anwar Makarim and the former Bali-based commander of East Timor, Major-General Adam Damiri. Dunn also wrote that “it is ‘inconceivable’ that General Wiranto was not aware of the massive operation mounted by his subordinate generals. The magnitude of the operation, and the resources need to conduct it, would have needed at least his condonement, for it to have been carried out.”47

### Conflict between CNRT and Fretilin

When CNRT was established in Peniche, Portugal, in 1998, a front called CPN (*Conselho Politico Nacional*, National Political Council) was set up. This body was expected to become the first cabinet of East Timor pending a democratic election, should Indonesia withdraw. However, after East Timor came under the UNTAET administration, communications with the East Timorese were conducted largely through the CNRT president, Xanana Gusmão. This outraged members of CPN, particularly those who were part of the Fretilin leadership. On 20 March 2000, Lú-Olo (Francisco Guterres) publicly attacked CNRT, insisting that his party was distancing itself from CNRT, because its leaders acted as authoritarians and disregarded the role of CPN. Fretilin, on its side, regarded CNRT as an umbrella organization for the resistance, a role which was now irrelevant. Fretilin wanted instead the political parties to take the lead of the country.48 As we shall see, this view was also the prevailing one within UNTAET.

There was also a personal dimension to the conflict. The individual styles of Xanana Gusmão and Mari Alkatíri could hardly be more different; the former guerilla leader being an outgoing, casual personality, while Alkatíri, who while in exile had studied law in Maputo, and worked as lawyer and consultant on Public International Law and Constitutional Law, also acted the role of lawyer, being reserved and formal. But it was not just a matter of style and temperament, there were also political differences, harking back to the 1974-75 period, when Alkatíri belonged to the radical left, and Gusmão was in the moderate center of Fretilin. Their different views diverged dramatically from 1977, when Fretilin adopted Marxism-

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Leninism as the party’s ideology. Gusmão formally left Fretilin in 1987 and from that time refused to accept that the party had a privileged status above other political organizations, while Alkatirí saw the party as the true representative of the Timorese people.\(^49\)

**Fretilin – a new beginning?**

Fretilin responded to the post-occupation political situation with an attempt to re-organize the party and re-formulate its politics. Lú-Olo handed in his rifle and left the Aileu cantonment for Dili, where he together with Mari Alkatirí arranged and led a Fretilin National Conference 15-20 May 2000. One outcome of the conference was a decision to convene a formal congress in 2001 to restructure the party. There were also strong resolutions in support of democracy and pluralism; and the establishment of a Commission on Tolerance and Unity, to address Fretilin errors and intolerance during the last 24 years.\(^50\)

**‘Timorization’**

On 24 March 2000, Sergio Vieira de Mello inaugurated the Public Service Commission, consisting of three Timorese and two internationals, to formulate policies and guidelines related to the recruitment of civil servants and other employees of public agencies. Soon after, a Civil Service Campus in Dili was opened, housing the Public Service Commission offices, and the Civil Service Academy.\(^51\) Contracting of East Timorese civil servants increased significantly between May and December 2000, yet, in spite of this ‘timorization’ as the catch-word was, international staff continued to dominate the administration and only a couple of the 13 District Administrators were Timorese.\(^52\)

Nearly three hundred people gathered for a CNRT meeting in Tibar, west of Dili, from May 29 to June 2, 2000. The participants restated the plan agreed upon in Melbourne in April


\(^{50}\) Rees, op. cit., p. 36.

\(^{51}\) Beauvois, op. cit. p.1143.

\(^{52}\) Niner, op. cit., p. 215.
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1999, with a constitutional commission to draft the constitution, but this time stressing the importance of public consultation and participation in the process. Regarding this, there was a major difference between the CNRT view and that of UNTAET. Peter Galbraith, the UNTAET Director of the Political Affairs, announced at Tigar a model of constitution making which did not provide for an independent commission, or stress the role of public participation:

The defining events of the political transition are the adoption of a constitution and the holding of free elections. Elections will choose a Constituent Assembly which in turn will write, debate and adopt a constitution. Following its adoption, the Constituent Assembly will become the Parliament (or legislative assembly) of the new country.  

Sergio Vieira de Mello at Tigar presented a plan for the ‘timorization’ also of the transitional administration; outlining an East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA), consisting of the National Consultative Council and a Transitional Cabinet, divided evenly between Timorese and internationals. Xanana Gusmão has spoken of the sense of relief within CNRT at the time; “we started to believe that Sergio was committed to the Timorese.”

While Vieira de Mello’s relation with East Timorese representatives improved, at least temporarily, DPKO officials in UN Headquarters were not amused. UNTAET had been empowered by Security Council Resolution 1272 to run the territory up until independence, and now it seemed that Viera de Mello was breaking the rules by his offer of sharing power in a mixed cabinet. Without informing DPKO beforehand, de Mello organized a video conference between Dili and New York to which he invited the intended Timorese cabinet members. According to Samantha Power, de Mello’s attitude was “if you want to deny the Timorese power, then have the fucking guts to say it to them yourself.”

Either the DPKO accepted de Mello’s arguments, or didn’t have ‘the fucking guts’ to say otherwise, for on July 15, 2000, the new mixed cabinet was sworn in, with four posts assigned to East Timorese - Mari Alkatíri, Economic Affairs, Ana Pessóa (Fretilin), Internal Administration, Father Filomeno Jacob (the Catholic Church), Social Affairs, João Carrascalão (UDT), Infrastructure, and José Ramos-Horta, Foreign Affairs. The remaining four (Police and Emergency Services, Justice, Finance, and Political Affairs) were assigned to internationals. With this, UNTAET’s Governance and Public Administration pillar was abandoned, as its departments were now transferred to the Transitional Cabinet.

**CNRT Congress August 2000, and a splitting-up of the organization**

CNRT held a congress in Dili 21-30 August 2000, with participants from every district in East Timor. Xanana Gusmão was re-elected as President and José Ramos Horta and Mario Carrascalão as Vice-Presidents. The congress adopted a Pact of National Unity, which committed all political parties to respect and uphold the outcome of the Popular Consultation of 30 August 1999, the CNRT Magna Carta of human rights, and free and fair elections. The congress further recommended that UNTAET should recruit more East Timorese into the administration, and that 30 percent of those should be women; it also endorsed a resolution on women’s rights. After a heated debate, the congress adopted Portuguese as East Timor’s

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54 Power, op. cit., p. 329.
55 Ibid.
official language to be supplemented by Tetun as a second official language, after 5-10 years of development. The language debate was largely split along generational lines, with younger preferring Bahasa Indonesia, the language in which they were educated. They were, however, over-ruled by the Lusophone-dominated CNRT board.57

The congress further elaborated upon the Melbourne and Tibar agreements about the process leading to a constitution, in which a constitutional commission, in consultation with the East Timorese people, would first draft the independence constitution. The draft constitution would then be submitted to an elected constituent assembly for approval and adoption. The constituent assembly would also be tasked with conducting further consultations and making any necessary amendments to the draft.

Sergio Vieira de Mello addressed the CNRT delegates and suggested two different options for adopting the constitution. The first model was that a constitutional commission prepare a draft constitution, with the possibility of a referendum on the draft being held at the same time as the elections for a constituent assembly. The second alternative proposed was that offered by the Political Affairs Department of UNTAET a few months earlier at the Tibar conference; to elect an assembly that would both draft and adopt a constitution.58 De Mello stressed the need for widespread participation regardless of model chosen.

Xanana Gusmão proposed at the congress that a Commissão Permanente, Permanent Council, should be given decision-making power within CNRT, but that in the interest of national unity there should still be a strong Presidency, which included himself, with José Ramos Horta and Mario Carrascalão as Vice-Presidents. Fretilin protested this proposal, whereupon Gusmão and Horta dramatically resigned, only to be re-elected on the final day of the congress. Fretilin felt the whole process had been stage-managed and refused to take part in the new Council. So did UDT.59 A restructured CNRT, with its name modified to CNRT/CN (the CN standing for Congresso Nacional, National Congress) was thereby reduced to a forum for minor parties, with increasing dependency on Gusmão.60 As Pat Walsh observed at the time, it was clear that CNRT had effectively run its course.61

When de Mello briefed the UN Security Council on September 29, 2000, he outlined the same constitution-making approach that the director of the Political Affairs Department, Peter Galbraith, had presented at the Tibar congress. De Mello stated that:

The major elements of political transition are clear. As things currently stand, our plan is to hold national elections in the second half of next year with a view to establishing a Constituent Assembly. This Assembly will be tasked with drafting the constitution, choosing the members of the new transitional government and serving as an interim legislature. Upon completion of the Constitution, the Assembly would become the new national Assembly of an independent East Timor.62

Unlike at the CNRT congress, there was no stressing of, nor indeed any mention of, a representative commission or of public consultations.

56 The East Timor Language Institute, for development of Tetun into an official language, was set up on 1 January 2000, with support from Japanese NGO’s.
58 Aucoin & Brandt, op. cit., p. 251.
60 Niner, op. cit., p. 216.
62 Aucoin & Brandt, op. cit., p. 252.
A National Council, with party politics at the fore

In October 2000, to appease insistent demands from the Timorese to be further included in policymaking, UNTAET replaced the fifteen member National Consultative Council (NCC) with a National Council (NC) of thirty-three (later expanded to thirty-six) members, selected from political parties, the Catholic and Protestant churches, the Muslim community, women and student organizations, and representatives from all districts, and with Xanana Gusmão as chairman. Up until now, UNTAET had treated CNRT as a local party, albeit the principal one. From now on the tone differed. When the National Council was established, UNTAET Regulation 2000/24 specified that seven representatives of CNRT be included. However, when membership was announced, the name CNRT was gone, and each appointee was presented as a political party representative. That the times were a-changing, was clear for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

The creation of the National Council and the Transitional Cabinet should have given the East Timorese significantly greater influence on politics. However, executive political power continued to lie in UNTAET’s hands, and Timorese leaders were soon less than happy with the ‘new order’. By December 2000, the East Timorese members of the Cabinet - with the exception of José Ramos-Horta - had threatened to resign.

Falintil/FDTL

Those included …

After the arrival of the InterFET, Falintil first cantoned at four different sites, and then moved to a single cantonment in Aileu. It was in connection with this, that the incident with the Falintil group from Bobonaro being intercepted and disarmed by InterFET took place. While UN forces were handling security, UNTAET officials seemed to forget about the guerrillas cantoned under poor conditions in Aileu. With the exception of a small amount of food supplied by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there was no external assistance. On 23 June 2000, Gusmão reported that the force was almost in a state of revolt.

Physical conditions and the uncertainty over their future status were not the sole causes of the disintegration of discipline in Aileu. For the first time many Falintil had to cohabit with each other, and long standing differences came to the surface. The Falintil command consisted almost entirely of Gusmão loyalists, under the joint leadership of Gusmão and Vice-Commander Taur Matan Ruak. The force led by Cornelio Gama, a.k.a. L-7, had broken with Gusmão in 1985 and developed a separate power base in the hinterland of Baucau through the cult-like organization, *Sagrada Familia*, which blended Catholic and animist beliefs. In early 2000, Gama took his men out of the Aielu cantonment and re-established his power base in Baucau.

UNTAET’s position on Falintil was from the beginning unclear. Some officials argued that East Timor did not need a national defence force; the October 1989 CNRM peace plan had also envisaged an independent East Timor without a standing army. However, the events of

64 Ingram, op. cit.
67 Rees, op. cit. pp. 34-35.
68 Shoesmith, op. cit., p. 248.
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1999 made the leadership reconsider this position. In September 2000, the East Timor Transitional Cabinet adopted the recommendations by an independent study team from the Centre for Defence Studies, King’s College, London, to establish the FDTL (Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste, the East Timor Defence Force) as a light-infantry force of 1,500 regulars and 1,500 reservists. To plan the development of the FDTL, an Office of Defense Force Development was established under Roque Rodrigues, who up until then had served as CNRT’s chief of staff. UNTAET agreed that the Falintil High Command would control the selection process for the first battalion, which ensured that the officer corps of the FDTL was selected from Falintil commanders loyal to Gusmão and Taur Matan Ruak. This provoked protests and allegations of not only political and geographical favouritism, as senior commanders and most of the Falintil recruits in the first battalion were drawn from the area collectively referred to as Firaku. On 1 February 2001 in a ceremony in Ailéu, Falintil was retired and F-FDTL was established. Taur Matan Ruak was appointed Commander-in-Chief, with the rank of Brigadier-General.\textsuperscript{69} By December 2001, the 650 strong first battalion had completed basic training, and recruitment for the second battalion open to all East Timorese - including women – between 18-21 years of age and with a high school education. This effectively excluded those Fretilin veterans who had not been recruited into the first battalion and whose loyalty to Gusmão and Ruak was questionable.

\textit{... and those left out}

De-mobilised Falintil veterans were provided some financial support by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), but this support ended in December 2001. The situation led to the establishing of different veteran’s associations, with Gusmão the leader of the largest, AVR (Associação Veteranos dos Resistência, Association of Veterans of the Resistance), founded in July 2001. Another organisation, FVF (Fundacao Veteranos das Falintil, Falintil Veterans Foundation), had close links to Taur Matan Ruak and his deputy, Colonel Lere Anan Timor. Of those Falintil, commanders and otherwise, who were excluded from F-FDTL there was also a sizeable minority with a less than cordial relationship with Gusmão and the F-FDTL High Command. Several veterans’ organisations with different political bases came into existence in 2000-2001. One such organisation was AC75 (Associação dos Antigos Combatantes das Falintil, the ex-Falintil Combatants Association), which was institutionally linked to Fretilin, but also had links to ‘security groups’, such as Colimau 2000 and Sagrada Familia.\textsuperscript{70} The AC75 was founded in early 2002, and was headed by Rogério Lobato, who after living for 24 years abroad returned to Timor-leste in October 2000, and used the discord among some ex-Falintil soldiers to create a power base for himself.\textsuperscript{71}

\textbf{The women - progress and backlash}

The women in post-occupation East Timor found that they still faced violence and had very little access to resources and political power. A 2004 study by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) found that family disputes and violence perpetrated by a husband against his wife was considered a ‘normal’ occurrence within the family, and that many men regarded

\textsuperscript{69} Walsh, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{70} Rees, op. cit., pp. 37-39.
\textsuperscript{71} Babo Soares, op. cit., p. 160.
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their wives as their possessions, having paid a bride-price for them.\textsuperscript{72} Manuela Leong Periera, Director of Fokupers (\textit{Forum Komunikast Untuk Perempuan Loro Sae} (the Communication Forum for East Timor Women), summarized the situation in 2001 (abridged):

East Timorese women continue to be victims of violence, and very often this violence occurs inside our own homes. It is a societal problem that we must identify as such. There must be clear laws against domestic violence, marital rape and the treatment of women as property. The East Timorese people are working to build a new constitution, and we need to work hard to ensure that women’s needs are included in this important document. This can help build a foundation for positive change. Our struggle continues.\textsuperscript{73}

I mentioned earlier the women’s struggle to be included in the Intra-Timorese dialogues in the 1990’s, and at the CNRT founding in Portugal 1998. In East Timor itself, the rights of women were raised as a distinct political issue in November 1998, when Maria Domingos Alves of OPMT (the Popular Organization of East Timorese Women) organized a rally in Dili against violence against women.\textsuperscript{74} The notion of gender mainstreaming was introduced by Milena Pires at a CNRT conference held in Melbourne in April 1999, and when CNRT later that year met in Darwin to formulate new political structures for the transition, a gender unit was included. Only after protests from East Timorese women was such a unit placed in the office of the deputy SRSG. From this base it set to work to advocate for gender equity and equality according to an East Timorese version of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action platform, created at the First Women’s Congress of East Timor in Dili, in June 2000. The Platform of Action contained a number of demands; among them that that the National Consultative Council have better representation of women; that UNTAET provide support for women’s groups, and that women would fill a minimum of 30% of places in the transitional government.\textsuperscript{75} Other demands were the establishment of laws prohibiting violence against women, and the development and implementation of an education campaign on the rights of women and children, with the aim to eliminate ‘the practice of discrimination against women, including traditional practices’.\textsuperscript{76}

REDE Feto Timor Loro Sa’e (East Timorese Women’s Network, an umbrella organization of women’s NGO’s) was formed at the Women’s Congress in June 2000. While the East Timorese women were struggling for the inclusion of gender aspects in the UN administration in East Timor, there was another struggle at the UN headquarters in New York, resulting in Security Council Resolution 1325, passed on 31 October 2000 (cf. Ch. 14.). REDE Feto issued a statement in response to Resolution 1325 only three days after its acceptance. It reads as follows (abridged):

From the invasion of 1975, Timorese women have contributed to all aspects of the resistance: When captured by the Indonesian military, we resisted and thus suffered twice as much, either by being raped or by giving our life. The women of East Timor still have a double battle to fight. We must combat our

\textsuperscript{72} Harris Rimmer, op. cit., pp. 128-131.
\textsuperscript{76} Charlesworth & Wood, op. cit., p. 334.
own society’s views of the role of women, while at the same time continuously advocating to the UNTAET and the East Timor Transitional Administration for policies and hiring practices that include women. Until we reach equal participation on the political, economic and social front, our fight is not finished.77

The struggle for equality between sexes, in Timor-Leste and elsewhere, is not ‘merely’ a moral issue, or a legal or philosophical question of justice. There is a well-researched connection between gender inequality and violence. Gender inequality, in all of its many manifestations, not only destroys homes but also significantly affects politics and security at both national and international levels. States that are more gender equal are less likely to go to war, are less likely to be involved in internal violent crises, and more likely to be democratic, stable and prosperous than states where norms of violence is rooted in gender inequality. In the words of Anthony Giddens: “…what are the most important forces promoting democracy and economic development in poorer countries?” He himself gives the answer: “Well, precisely the equality and education of women.”78 His words were later echoed by UN General-Secretary Kofi Annan: “The world is starting to grasp that there is no policy more effective in promoting development, health, and education than the empowerment of women and girls. And I would venture that no policy is more important in preventing conflict, or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended.”79

The question of language and national identity

After Indonesia’s invasion in 1975, the clandestine East Timorese leadership decided that the language of a future independent nation would be Portuguese. This was confirmed in April 1998, when a decision was made at the CNRT conference in Peniche, Portugal, to adopt Tetun as the national language and Portuguese as the official language in an independent East Timor. As we have seen, this was again confirmed at the CNRT congress in August 2000. The question of language was hotly emotional, and led to angry debates at the time. As many as 90 percent of people under 35 spoke Indonesian, as did 40 percent of those over 35. But just 10 percent spoke Portuguese, almost all of them in the older generation. Importantly, much of the political leadership belonged to this Lusophonic minority. A survey of national identity conducted in Dili in August 2002 by the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) among East Timorese tertiary students and East Timorese political figures, showed a gap between the Portuguese speaking state and much of the wider society. 80 This can be illustrated by the differing views of José Ramos Horta and Fernando de Araújo, a.k.a. Lasama, respectively; the latter being one of the founders of Renetil. In the words of José Ramos Horta, “If you take away Portuguese language and religion, there is no such thing as East

Lasama saw it differently: “East Timor’s identity is not Portuguese. It’s Tetun, it’s Mambai, it’s Makasae. Portuguese language is the same as Bahasa Indonesia - the colonialist language. If you want to use Portuguese, it’s OK, but you cannot say that this is our East Timorese identity. I don’t want to use this language that’s just spoken by the elite, or by one group. It’s a kind of alienation.” Other aspects of Portuguese cultural heritage, however, were subject to a high degree of consensus. In particular ‘being Catholic’ was rated as very important to being ‘truly East Timorese’ by 83 per cent of respondents. The survey showed a strong correlation between attitudes towards Tetum and Catholicism, reflecting the Church’s 1981 decision to use Tetun in services, which reinforced the language’s status as a lingua franca. For the East Timorese tertiary students participating in this study, ‘history’, i.e. the struggle against the Indonesian occupation, emerged as the most undisputed object of national pride.

**CNRT/CN is dissolved, Fretilin organizes**

On 9 June 2001, Xanana Gusmão announced at an extraordinary conference in Dili that the CNRT/CN had dissolved itself, to allow its constituent parties to contest the upcoming election freely. While CNRT had been a widely accepted umbrella organization among Timorese when UNTAET was established, by the time ‘Timorization’ took place in the second half of 2000, the CNRT was now obsolete. The bitterness of Xanana Gusmao can be deduced from his New Year’s address 31 December 2000 (abridged):

> We are witnessing an obsessive acculturation to standards that hundreds of international experts try to convey to the East Timorese. Some think that mere political party membership is a synonym of democracy, and CNRT is looked at as an obstacle. The CNRT is more mature than the parties. Our political experience over the past 25 years alerts us to the possibility of violence amidst the people; we are observing manoeuvres by certain groups which are showing no respect for our People’s right to live in peace and the right to never again face a situation where Timorese kill other Timorese.

Fretilin, on the other hand, organized a National Party Congress 10-15 July in Dili, with the aim to develop the party’s political program, and plan its election strategies. More than five hundred supporters from all districts participated, as did UNTAET authorities, top level representatives of Mozambique’s Frelimo party, and leaders of other East Timor political parties. Even Xanana Gusmão held a speech at the occasion.

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81 Leach, op. cit., p. 141.
82 Ibid, p. 142. While it may be argued, as Lasama did, that Portuguese is the language of the Timorese, it might also be argued that Portuguese, spoken by more than 200 million people, gives access to a larger world. CPLP (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries), was created in 1996, with the promotion of the Portuguese language as its only cultural goal. Founding members were all the lusophone countries (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tome e Príncipe) and East Timor as an observer.
83 The strength of the Catholic Church was demonstrated in April 2005, when thousands of people demonstrated for three weeks in Dili, demanding that then Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri resign because of the government’s decision to drop mandatory religious education from the national school curriculum.
84 New Year’s Message by Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, President of the CNRT/CN Dili, 31 December 2000, [http://www.etan.org/et2001a/january/01-06/01xanan.htm](http://www.etan.org/et2001a/january/01-06/01xanan.htm)
85 Babo Soares, op. cit., p. 228.
Elections for a constituent assembly

On December 12, 2000, Xanana Gusmão presented to the National Council a timeline for the process leading to independence, proposing that, following elections, the constitution should be debated, drafted, and adopted by the constituent assembly in a period of ninety days. The council requested that its Standing Committee on Political Affairs arrange hearings to receive suggestions from the public on the matter. Between 18 -23 January 2001, representatives of political parties, civil society; the church, and academia, voiced their opinions to the committee, many with similarities to those already formulated at the CNRT meetings in Melbourne, Tibar and Dili; i.e. that a constitutional commission would consult with the population and draft the constitution.

On 23 February, the National Council endorsed an ambitious schedule, with registration of voters, a civic and electoral campaign and the election of a Constituent Assembly to develop and proclaim a constitution. Few of the suggestions made at the January hearings were incorporated in the final version of the plan, such as the demand for a constitutional commission and that sufficient time be allocated for the process. Fretlin used its majority in the National Council to push through a clause that provided for the transformation of the constituent assembly into a national parliament upon the entering into force of the constitution. UNTAET Regulation 2001/2, ‘On the Election of a Constituent Assembly to Prepare a Constitution for an Independent and Democratic East Timor’, was promulgated on 16 March 2001.

On 27 March 2001, the human rights organizations Yayasan Hak presented an alternative draft regulation, suggesting the establishment of constitutional commissions to consult the people at district and sub-district levels, and to provide their input to the Constituent Assembly. This process would over a twelve month period include a public information phase; a debating phase; a consultation phase; a reporting phase; and finally, a drafting phase. The UNTAET Political Affairs Department and Fretlin opposed the proposal, arguing that such an undertaking would necessitate an extension of the UNTAET mandate; an unwelcome proposition for UN member states who were already questioning the expenses – half a million US$ a day - for the East Timor mission. Xanana Gusmão supported the proposal, reversing his previous support of a ninety-day constitution-making process. When the proposal was defeated in the National Council, Gusmão resigned as president of the NCC. Sergio Vieira de Mello nominated José Ramos Horta to replace Gusmão, but this was rejected by the Council. On 9 April, the NC instead elected Manuel Carrascalão as its new President. The vote was a draw between Carrascalão and Horta, whereupon Horta withdrew his candidature.

The National Council debate about the Yayasan HAK proposal, however, had made it clear that there was a broad demand for some kind of popular consultation. Between June 18 and July 14, UNTAET-established commissions organised over 200 public hearings, involving

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86 Aucoin & Brandt, op. cit., pp. 252-254.
89 Aucoin & Brandt, op. cit., p. 260.
90 The importance attached to Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos Horta by the international society can be deduced by the fact that Gusmão appeared at the UN in New York to inform on recent developments in East Timor twice during the period leading up to the elections on 30 August. The first time was on April 5, 2001, at a Security Council open briefing on East Timor. The next time Gusmão appeared at the UN was on 18 May, 2001, this time in company with José Ramos Horta (Security Council, Press Release, SC/7061, 18 May 2001, *Security Council Discusses Current Situation in East Timor and Tasks Leading up to Election on 30 August*. New York: United Nations.)
more than 38,000 people. Yayasan HAK and the women’s organization Fokupers also organised consultations with communities across East Timor. Many participants expressed doubts that their views would be taken into account by the political elite; hostility was also expressed towards the involvement of foreigners in the process of constitution drafting.\(^91\) A majority of the participants expressed a preference for either a strong presidential or semi-presidential system of government, obviously envisaging Xanana Gusmão in a leading role. Both UNTAET and the NGO’s found that people did not understand the reason for the upcoming election – many commented that they had already voted for CNRT, with Xanana as President, during the 1999 referendum. A survey organised by the Asia Foundation also found that only 5% of the eligible voters correctly stated that the election was for a Constituent Assembly. 61% thought that the election was for the presidency.\(^92\)

Sixteen parties registered to contest the election. Because so many members of the National Council were running for office, that body was dissolved in July 2001. The following were the political parties contesting the August 2001 election in East Timor, presented in “pecking order”, i.e. from top to bottom according to the election results:

- **Fretilin (Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente, Revolutionary Front of an Independent East Timor),** led by Francisco Guterres, Lú-Olo.
- **PD (Partido Democrático, the Democratic Party)** was founded by activists from the student and youth movements. Leaders were Fernando ‘Lasama’ de Araújo and Mariano Sabino Lopes, both key clandestine members.
- **PSD (Partido Social Democráta, Social Democrat Party),** a center-left party, formed and led by Mario Viegas Carrascalão.
- **ASDT (Associação Social-Democráta Timorense, Social Democratic Association of East Timor),** led by Francisco Xavier do Amaral. After his return to East Timor, he was welcomed back at the Fretilin conference in May 2000, and appointed head of the Reconciliation Commission of the party. The reconciliation attempt failed, and in early 2001 Amaral re-established ASDT, the 1974 pre-Fretilin movement, of which he had been the leader.\(^93\)
- **UDT (União Democrática Timorense, Timorese Democratic Union) led by João Carrascalão.**
- **PDC (Partido Democrática Cristão, Christian Democratic Party.)**
- **KOTA (Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain, Association of Timorese heroes).** Primarily an association of liurai families.
- **PNT (Partido Nacionalista Timorense, Partai Nasionalis Timor, Timorese Nationalist Party.)** Headed by Abílio Araújo, the party supported Bahasa Indonesia as the official language of East Timor alongside Portuguese, and argued for the recognition of the 1975 RDTL government of which Araújo had been a minister.
- **PPT (Partido do Povo do Timor, People’s Party of Timor. Led by Jacob Xavier, who claimed to be a descendant of the King of Portugal.**
- **PL (Partai Liberal, the Liberal party.)**
- **UDC (União Democrática Cristã do Timor-Leste, Christian Democrat Union.)**
- **PST, Partido Socialista do Timor-Leste (the Socialist Party of Timor.) Led by Avelino Coelho da Silva, and the only avowed Marxist party.**
- **PDM (Partido Democrático de Maubere, the Democratic Maubere Party.)**
- **Apodeti**

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93 Walsh, op. cit.
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- BRTT (Barisan Rakyat Timor Timur, East Timor People’s Front.) Led by Francisco Lopes da Cruz. Established in 1999 to support autonomy in the August referendum.
- PTT (Partido Trabalhista Timorense, the Timorese Labour Party.)
- Parentil (Partido Republika Nacional Timor Leste, National Republic Party of East Timor.)
- PDM (Partai Demokratik Maubere, Maubere Democratic Party.)

The voting turnout was very high, 93% of 425,000 eligible voters. Fretilin won 55 out of the 88 seats in the assembly, five short of the number needed to approve the constitution on its own. The support by the ASDT, with six seats; gave Fretilin this majority. Fretilin was opposed by the PD, with seven seats, and PSD, 6 seats. Five smaller parties, UDT, PDC, KOTA, PNT and PPT each elected two candidates, and two parties, PL (Partai Liberal) and UDC got one seat each. Twenty-four (27%) of the assembly members were women.

Francisco Guterres (Lú-Olo) of Fretilin was elected President, with two Vice-Presidents, Francisco Xavier do Amaral (ASDT) and Arlindo Marçal (PDC). A ten-member Council of Ministers was formed, with Mari Alkatiri as Chief Minister. Six ministers were members of Fretilin. Two women were appointed to the ministerial portfolios of Justice and Finance.

Having gained a majority in the Constituent Assembly, Fretilin proposed that the body be changed into the first parliament of East Timor. Xanana Gusmão instead called for a new election for the parliament, in which he was backed up by an alliance called GDDPE, the Group for the Defence of Democracy, Peace and Stability in East Timor, headed by João Carrascalão and with representatives from PST, PD, UDT plus a number of independents. Their resistance was to no avail. On 31 January 2002, the Constituent Assembly voted to transform itself into East Timor's first legislature upon final approval of the Constitution.

On February 6, 2002, the assembly approved a constitution draft, modelled largely on those of Portugal and Mozambique. The reports from the UNTAET and Yayasan/HAK were largely ignored, most members did not even read them. The Portuguese language document was then translated into Indonesian, English and Tetun, and 35,000 copies were distributed to various groups for review. After a number of amendments, the Constitution was adopted on March 22.

The 2002 Constitution of Timor-Leste is a 168-clause document, outlining not only the structure of government - a semi-presidential system, with executive power located in the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and with limited presidential power. The constitution begins with a history of the nation’s struggle for independence and the need to build a democratic and independent nation based on the rule of law. It links its recognition of fundamental rights to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes protections for the right to life, freedom, security, and personal integrity, as well as equal protection before the law for all races, genders, and religions. Over 40 substantial provisions providing for the protection of human rights were included in the finalised text. Portuguese and Tetun were designated the two official languages, with English and Bahasa Indonesia recognized as ‘working languages’ of the civil service for as long as ‘deemed necessary.’ Reflecting the untiring work of women’s organizations, the constitution states as fundamental that men and women shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social, and cultural life,

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95 Devereux, op. cit., p. 23.
98 Devereux, op. cit., pp-3-5.
99 Shoesmith, op. cit., p. 244.
and that the law shall promote equality in the exercise of civil and political rights and non-discrimination on the basis of gender for access to political positions.\(^\text{100}\)

### A judicial system, and UN & ET police forces

The Timor-Leste judicial system was virtually nonexistent when UNTAET was established in 1999. There were less than ten lawyers in the country, and court buildings were looted and burned. Because almost all of East Timor’s lawyers had been trained in Indonesian universities, UNTAET decided in November 1999 that Indonesian law should be the applicable law except where it conflicted with international standards. The first Timorese judges, prosecutors, and public defenders were installed on January 7, 2000, and on March 6, 2000, UNTAET Regulation No. 2000/11 was promulgated, in which four district courts and a court of appeal were established.\(^\text{101}\)

The UNTAET civilian police contingent, Civpol, was a major problem. From the outset, its performance was met by considerable criticism. Insufficient planning had occurred prior to the deployment, and the overall quality of those recruited was low. Coming from close to fifty countries, almost none spoke a language intelligible to the East Timorese, and interpreters were scarce. Investigations into killings committed in 1999 were slow, and close to non-existent in rape cases. One factor was the lack of women investigators. Less than 4 percent of the Civpol force overall was female, and only one had special training in investigating sexual crimes.\(^\text{102}\)

Recruitment of the East Timorese police force began in January 2001, although the PNTL (Polícia Nacional Timor Leste, the East Timor National Police) was not formally established as a force until August 2001. The police academy started training its first Timorese recruits in late March. Many of the police officers who were recruited had previously served in the Indonesian police, and were mainly Kaladi. Some veterans who were not selected for the F-FDTL were also included in the PNT. In the words of Ludovic Hood, “UN’s failure to develop the PNTL as a meaningful and sustainable institution was primarily the result of three main factors: inadequate planning and deficient mission design, unimaginative and weak leadership, and negligible Timorese ownership of the process.”\(^\text{103}\)

The seeds of a politization of the state’s security institutions were sown, which were to have tragic results in times to come. In response to the international outcry over the violence of 1999, and as a solution to the UN’s decision not to pursue ‘the real deal’, i.e. an international tribunal for East Timor, UNTAET in June 2000 established a Serious Crimes Unit, which would deal exclusively with crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Two Special Panels and an Appeal Panel were assigned to the Dili district court. These panels were to be composed of one Timorese and two international judges, and were a political and financial compromise that sought to balance the strong desire of some members of the international community for implementing criminal trials with a need to maintain cordial relations with Indonesia and keep costs down.


The Serious Crimes Unit was at all times under-staffed and under-funded. In order for the two trial panels and one appeal panel to operate, six international judges were needed. From June 2000 until July 2003 there was never a time when all these positions were filled. In addition to the lack of judges, there were no judges’ clerks, researchers, or secretaries.\(^{104}\) Added to this was an almost Babylonian confusion of languages. The Special Panels worked in four different languages; Tetun, Indonesian, Portuguese, and English. Defendants tended to speak Indonesian and/or Tetun. National lawyers addressed the court in Indonesian. International lawyers spoke predominantly English. Judges spoke either English or Portuguese. Some defendants or witnesses spoke only local languages such as Fataluku or Bunak, and many of the interpreters had no formal training and no previous experience of legal interpretation.\(^{105}\) The first Special Panel commenced operations in January 2001, but trials were subject to lengthy delays due to the problems mentioned above. The second panel was not operational until November 2001. The result was that a backlog of cases built up.

Following the publication of the Dunn reports in April 2001, and the East Timor Prosecutor General’s response, Australian journalist Mark Dodd traveled to Dili to report on the Serious Crimes Unit. He found that “the not so serious crimes unit”, as it was dubbed by its staff, was on the point of collapse, ‘with morale at rock bottom’. One investigator said that at times he wondered if the Serious Crimes Unit and the administration were on the same side. "They are holding reconciliation negotiations with militia leaders we want to arrest," he said.\(^{106}\)

On December 11, 2001, the Special Panel for Serious Crimes issued its first verdict, when it found ten militia members guilty of crimes against humanity. While the Serious Crimes Court was successful in these and other cases, its limited resources meant that at the same time a numerous backlog of other cases was piling up. The East Timor General Prosecutor’s hope that Jakarta would take action, and his statement that the UN would increase the pressure on Indonesia to cooperate with investigations both came to nil. The 6 April 2000 Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the Indonesian Attorney-General and Sergio Vieira de Mello had, as we have seen, stipulated that both parties ‘transfer to each other all persons whom the competent authorities of the requesting party are prosecuting for a criminal offence or whom these parties want for the purpose of serving a sentence’ The Government of Indonesia now distanced itself from the MOU, declaring that the Attorney-General had no right to sign it without the prior agreement of parliament.\(^{107}\) Consequently, more than three hundred of the close to four hundred indicted were located out of the court’s reach in Indonesia, meaning that the architects of the violence were granted \textit{de facto} impunity.\(^{108}\) The Timorese militias were, by comparison, small fry, ‘foot soldiers of bigger forces’.\(^{109}\)


\(^{105}\) de Bertodano, op. cit.

\(^{106}\) Mark Dodd, ‘Massacres go Unpunished at UN Crimes Unit,’ \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, May 1, 2001.


\(^{109}\) Tewelde Weldemichael, op. cit., p. 303.
The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation

Using the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a role model, CAVR (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation), was established by UNTAET, in collaboration with the National Council and Cabinet, on 13 July 2001. Regulation no. 2001/10, stipulated that CAVR - composed of 36 commissioners, ‘of high moral character, impartiality, and integrity’ - was to establish a truth-seeking function inquiring into human rights violations in East Timor during the period 25 April 1974-25 October 1999, taking into particular consideration the events before, during, and after the popular consultation of 30 August 1999 and after the entry of Indonesia into East Timor on 7 December 1975. CAVR was also to function as a community reconciliation body, to facilitate agreements between local communities and the perpetrators of non-serious crimes committed over the same period. The word ‘reception’ in the commission title refers to its wish to offer Timorese who fled to West Timor after the independency vote an orderly way of being received back into their communities. By establishing that the Commission was to deal with abuses between 1974 and 1999, it also established that it would not only deal with militias and other collaborators with the Indonesian authorities, but also with the perpetrators of violence during the civil war in 1974 and atrocities committed by Timorese towards other Timorese during the early period of the resistance. Approximately 260 staff, including 15 international advisors, was responsible for implementing the various programs.

The Commission’s main reconciliation initiative at the grassroots level was its programme on the Community Reconciliation Process (CRP). The CRP procedure was based on the philosophy that community reconciliation could best be achieved through a facilitated, village-based, participatory mechanism. More than 1400 cases involving less serious crimes, such as arson, theft or killing of livestock, were thus resolved through procedures involving community service and/or customary law, in particular the usage of nahe biti, which involves a process of discussion in order to seek consensus amongst opposing parties. More serious cases were referred back to the Serious Crimes Unit, but many of these cases disappeared among the long list of cases that were waiting to be heard. The result of this state of affairs was the creation of an ‘impunity gap’ by which perpetrators of more serious crimes remained outside the scope of either the CRP or the Serious Crimes process.

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111 Many among the rural population interpreted the recent conflicts between East Timorese in terms of an imbalance between the physical-material and the spiritual-ancestral world, caused by breaching of bandu, traditional rules (cf. Ch. 3.) When the bandu is violated, the ancestors are upset, resulting in retribution against individual transgressors or even the entire community. Balance then needs to be reinstated through the performance of proper rituals and ceremonies (José Trindade and Bryant Castro, Rethinking Timorese Identity as a Peace-Building Strategy: The Lorosa’e–Loromonu Conflict from a Traditional Perspective. Dili: The EU Rapid Reaction Mechanism Programme, 6th June 2007.)

112 Jeffrey, op. cit.
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A Human Rights trial in Jakarta

The Indonesian parliament in November 2000 passed Act No. 26/2000, thereby establishing a human rights court, with definitions of crimes closely patterned after the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court. The Act also authorized the establishment of ad hoc tribunals to prosecute specific cases of human rights crimes. In April 2000, Attorney-General Marzuki Darusman appointed a task force of investigators and announced that his office would give priority to five out of the many incidents investigated by KPP-HAM in East Timor; the 6 April 1999 massacre of civilians in Liquica; the attack on the home of Mauel Carrascalão in Dili on 17 April; the massacre of civilians in Suai on 6 September; a 6 September attack on the home of Bishop Belo; and the murder of Dutch journalist Sander Thoenes on 23 September. The decision to give priority to five cases effectively limited who would be prosecuted, since the investigation was never expanded beyond those five incidents. In the meantime, President Abdurrahman Wahid, who had promised the UN Secretary-General that human rights abusers would be vigorously prosecuted, was impeached on 23 July 2001, for reasons beyond the scope of this book. He was replaced on 1 August as President of Indonesia by Megawati Sukarnoputri, who had described military leaders involved in the violence in East Timor as national heroes. In her first official act, Megawati redefined the jurisdiction of the ad hoc tribunal to be limited to crimes committed in three East Timor districts – Dili, Liquica and Suai – and limited to crimes committed in just two months – April or September 1999. This decision appears to have been intended to confine the investigation to the five priority cases identified by the Attorney-General.

The trial commenced on March 14, 2002. One police general and a senior official then stood trial for their role in the Suai massacre, marking the first of a series of trials for 18 suspects. The highest-ranking individuals charged were East Timor governor Abilio Soares, Timbul Silaen, Chief of Police in Dili, and Adam Damiri, military commander for the region that included East Timor. The prosecution made no attempt to show what the KPP-HAM Report had concluded, namely that the violence was a direct result of Government policy. All 18 defendants were indicted for failing to prevent crimes against humanity, rather than for committing such crimes.

12 of the 18 accused were acquitted at trial, and five others had their convictions later overturned by Indonesia’s Appeals Court. None of the accused was detained. Even those convicted at trial were allowed to roam free pending their appeals. The only person to be imprisoned was militia figurehead Eurico Guterres, who was given a sentence of ten years. The UN Commission of Experts, appointed by the Secretary-General in February 2005 to review the judicial processes of the work of the Indonesian Human Rights Court on East

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114 Ibid, p. 185.
115 The same day, an article in the Sydney Morning Herald made public the contents of DSD (Defence Signals Directorate) material from September 1999, showing that President Habibie’s Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security, General Feisal Tanjung, used a network of officers in a campaign to avert a vote for independence, and that when this failed, Tanjung organized the forced deportation of one third of East Timor’s population and the destruction of infrastructure, with the assistance of two other ministers in Habibie’s cabinet, the former generals A.M. Hendropriyono and Mohammad Yunus Yosfiah (Hamish McDonald, ‘Australia’s bloody East Timor secret. Spy intercepts confirm Government knew of Jakarta’s hand in massacres.’ Sydney Morning Herald, March 14, 2002.)
116 Cammack, op. cit., p. 185.
118 Eurico Guterres was sentenced in 2002, but was free on appeal until he began serving his sentence in 2006. Indonesia’s Supreme Court later overturned Guterres’ verdict on appeal, and he was freed in April 2008.
Reconciliation or justice?

The past 25 odd years had seen various Timorese start a civil war, sell out compatriots in political deals, enlist as partisans with invading Indonesians, massacre prisoners, become spies and informers, and finally take part in a scorched earth campaign – and all this in a country with a strong local tradition of revenge; where serious feuds are kept up for generations. As Jovito Araújo, deputy chairman of CAVR, said about the odds for reconciliation: “It will not be easy. Timorese are not a people who find it easy to forgive. They keep everything a long, long time. Especially revenge. They will not forget something that hurt them. They will keep it going a very long time, generation to generation.”120 On the other hand, East Timor’s political leaders have consistently prioritized peace, stability, and reconciliation over the pursuit of justice for human rights violations. In 1996, José Ramos Horta and Bishop Belo were also awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, for their efforts towards self-determination; based on non-violence and dialogue with the Indonesian authorities. When Xanana Gusmão attended the donor’s meeting in Tokyo, 16-17 December 1999, he arrived there from Strasbourg, where he had received the European Parliament’s Sakharov Human Rights Prize in Strasbourg. Only a few months earlier, Falintil had, under his command, demonstrated great restraint by not retaliating in the face of gross provocation by the TNI and pro-autonomy militias.

Xanana Gusmão, well aware of public yearning for justice, or perhaps retaliation, argued that for people living in impoverished villages without electricity, clean water, decent housing, or medical care; the pursuit of justice would lead to a destabilizing settling of scores among Timorese, while Indonesian perpetrators remained beyond the reach of prosecutors. CNRT also saw it as crucial to establish a functioning relation with Indonesia, rather than to pursue a justice that was deemed to be out of reach. In the words of José Ramos Horta:

There is not much we can do to bring Indonesians to trial by ourselves. It is important that we do not destabilize the slow process of democratization in Indonesia because it is our best guarantee. They have shown the courage to accept our independence. Knowing that the situation is so difficult and that the UN Security Council doesn’t want an international tribunal, it doesn’t make sense for us to pursue it.121

I find it difficult to disagree with Horta’s assessment of the situation. An international ad hoc tribunal for East Timor was simply not on the international agenda. While the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) had marked a turning point in the prosecution and punishment of human rights violations, the mounting

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121 Kingston, op. cit. p. 233.
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expense and duration of each tribunal saw the Security Council become increasingly reluctant to fund new international tribunals of this scale. The report of ICIET (the International Commission of Inquiry in East Timor) concluded that the UN should consider the establishment of an international tribunal for East Timor, but UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan preferred that Indonesia investigate the crimes. The ad hoc tribunal in Jakarta, however, was set up to meet the pressure from the international community, not to get justice for the victims. In the end, impunity reigned. Renée Jeffrey has written that in post-conflict states, the pursuit of accountability is determined by institutional, political, and financial capacities and constraint.  

Oil

In 1989, Australia and Indonesia signed the Timor Gap Treaty, thereby creating a zone of cooperation whose southern boundary was based on Indonesia’s claim to a 200-mile jurisdiction, while the northern boundary was based on Australia’s claim to a boundary set by the continental shelf. Portugal then took Australia to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, where proceedings lasted from 1991-95. In the absence of one of the parties (Indonesia) the court declared itself incompetent to rule, but warned Australia that the treaty would not be binding on an independent East Timor. If East Timor succeeded Indonesia, it would inherit the consequences of a treaty to which it had not been a party. But if the treaty was recognized as invalid, as the ICJ had anticipated, everything was up for re-negotiation, including frontiers.

In October 1999, Seven oil companies, led by Phillips Petroleum, approved development of the Bayu-Undan gas and oil field, in the zone of cooperation, and in November Woodside (the main operator in the area in 1955, pre-invasion), in a project involving BHP and Shell, began producing oil in the Laminaria/Corallina fields. Mari Alkatiri, East Timorese spokesman on the Timor Gap, reacted by declaring that from the Timorese side, the Timor Gap Treaty was considered illegal, and that the new state would not accept to be successor to it.

In January 2000, a high-level Australian delegation landed in Dili with the objective of convincing the political leadership to accept the 1989 Timor Gap treaty; to simply substitute the name Indonesia with that of East Timor. In this they were, at least initially, successful, as on 10 February 2000, Australia and UNTAET signed an interim Exchange of Notes and Memorandum of Understanding, which continued the 1989 Australia-Indonesia Timor Gap Treaty terms, replacing Indonesia with East Timor. These agreements specified a 50-50 division between Australia and East Timor of oil and gas production from the zone of cooperation defined in the Timor Gap Treaty, now called the Joint Petroleum Development Area (JPDA). Nothing was said about areas outside of the JPDA, which should be within East Timor’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ.)

\[\text{\textsuperscript{122} Jeffrey, op. cit.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{123} The La'o Hamutuk Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 8: December 2002 (2/3)}\]
East Timor's leadership, however, rejected this agreement. They wished instead to renegotiate the agreement on the basis of the line of equidistance between the two countries. This strategy was supported by UNTAET’s Director of Political Affairs, Peter Galbraith, who infuriated his Australian adversaries to the point where the Howard government tried to have him sacked from his role with the UN in East Timor.\textsuperscript{125} Galbraith’s point of view was backed up and strengthened by Ramiro Paz, UNTAET senior economics advisor in the East Timor Transitional Administration, who in February 2001 wrote a six-page paper "The Timor Gap Treaty vs. an Exclusive Economic Zone: Economic Independence for East Timor" for ETTA Economics Minister Mari Alkatiri. In the paper, Paz strongly recommended that East Timor pursue its full EEZ entitlements under international law, rather than accept or revise the terms of the now-defunct Timor Gap Treaty, which he argued were not binding to the new state of East Timor. Paz referred specifically to article 15 of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) which came into force in 1994, which stipulates the following as regards to the delineation of the territorial sea:

Where the coast of the two states are opposite or adjacent to each other, neither of the two states is entitled, failing agreement to the contrary, to extend its territorial sea beyond the median line, every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the basis from which the breadth of the territorial sea of each two states is measured.

The result would be that three major oil fields now situated in the ill-defined (and probably illegal) Australian seabed, would fall into East Timor’s Exclusive Economic Zone.\textsuperscript{126} Discontent in East Timor was further encouraged by PetroTimor, a company partly owned by Oceanic Exploration of Denver, Colorado, which had been granted exploration concessions by Portugal in the Timor Sea in 1974, but suspended explorations due to the increasing political unrest. Petro Timor now suggested (along the lines of Ramiro Paz) that legal action might overturn the 1989 treaty and enlarge East Timor’s seabed rights, at the expense of both Australia and Indonesia.\textsuperscript{127} Renewed negotiations resulted in a provisional ‘Timor Sea Arrangement’, which was agreed upon on 5 July 2001.

It replaced ‘Area A’ in the former treaty with Indonesia with a new ‘Joint Petroleum Development Area’ — though the area was defined in identical terms — with East Timor to receive 90 per cent of the hydrocarbon revenues generated therein, instead of the previous 50 per cent.\textsuperscript{128} But this 90% share was only to apply in the Bayu-Undan field, not in the Laminaria/Corallina fields to the west, which Australia was to exploit unilaterally, or the Greater Sunrise field to the east, where East Timor was to receive an 18% share. PetroTimor reacted to this agreement by filing a suit in Australia, seeking one billion dollars for the loss of petroleum rights in the Timor Sea.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{125} Cleary, op. cit., p. 53.
\textsuperscript{127} José Ramos Horta in 1990 warned Australian oil companies that a future independent East Timor would review all previous agreements in the area, and that oil companies that join in the violation of the Timorese maritime resources might see their exploration rights transferred to American companies, such as Oceanic Exploration (José Ramos Horta, 'Preface', in Sasha Stepan, Credibility Gap. Australia and the Timor Gap Treaty. Development Dossier No. 28, Fitzroy, Victoria: ACFOA, October 1990.).
\textsuperscript{129}On 3 February 2003, the Federal Court denied their case on jurisdictional grounds.
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The opportunity to end the dispute about the legalities re the Timor Gap Treaty and the maritime boundary between East Timor and Australia by the means of international arbitration seemingly vanished when the Australian government decided, on 21 March 2002, to withdraw from the International Court of Justice’s jurisdiction on maritime issues, and rejected arbitration by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in Hamburg. The response of the East Timor leadership was to label this expedient ‘an unfriendly action.’¹³⁰

Two days later, on March 23, PetroTimor conducted seminars on Timor Gap in Dili, in which their experts argued that East Timor should rightfully own 100% of Greater Sunrise and Bayu-Undan, as well as all of Laminaria/Corallina. The company also commissioned a preliminary study evaluating the option of a pipeline from Sunrise to East Timor.¹³¹ The natural gas in the Greater Sunrise field needs to be liquefied and shipped on tankers to buyers in other countries. This liquefaction process requires a major industrial facility, connected to the Greater Sunrise field through an undersea gas pipeline. Discussions about where this pipeline/industrial facility was to be situated – Darwin, Australia, or on the southern coast of Timor island – was to be another stumbling-block in the negotiations between the two countries for years to come.¹³² Those discussions, however, are beyond the scope of this book.

The last state-building block – and an ominous display of non-state power

Another milestone in East Timor’s process towards independence was reached on 14 April 2002, when Xanana Gusmão was elected President.¹³³ His sole opponent was Xavier do Amaral, President of the short-lived Democratic Republic of East Timor in 1975.¹³⁴ Out of the 378,548 ballots cast in the election, Gusmão received 82.7 per cent and Xavier do Amaral 17.3 per cent of the votes. On 18 April, Roque Rodrigues was appointed Secretary of State for Defence. Rodrigues represented a compromise candidate for the highly sensitive position – acceptable to the President, the Prime Minister and the F-FDTL High Command. It was at the same time a personal and political snub to Rogério Lobato, who had been Defence Minister in 1975, but was now being excluded from the corridors of power. Outside of those corridors,

¹³¹ La’o Hamutuk, Petrotimor, https://www.laohamutuk.org/OilWeb/Company/PetroTim/PetroIdx.htm
¹³³ Niner, op. cit., p. 219.
¹³⁴ Shoesmith, op. cit., p. 243.
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however, he was still a force to be reckoned with, which he amply demonstrated when he arranged several marches by two to three thousand ex-Falintil veterans and unemployed youths on Dili. While he may have acquired a somewhat tarnished reputation during his many years in exile, he was still a bona fide hero from the brief civil war in September 1975, and brother of Nicoláu, iconic leader of the early armed resistance against Indonesia. The marches were a thinly veiled threat by Lobato that he could mobilise large numbers of men outside of the realm of the state if he was not given a share of political power ‘on the inside’.* Clearly, all was not well in the soon to be independent East Timor.

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*Rees, op. cit., p. 393.
Epilogue/Prologue
From early morning on May 19, 2002, thousands upon thousands of East Timorese headed out of Dili – by foot, by motorcycle, on the back of crowded trucks - towards Tasi Tolu, a place of killings and disappearances in the 1970’s, but also the place where the Pope conducted an open air mass in 1989. Many carried flags, many had their faces painted in the colour of the flag, as many as could fit had attended morning mass in the garden of Bishop Belo’s residence.

While the Timorese were on their way to Tasi Tolu, a great number of foreign dignitaries arrived at Dili airport. The guests had come in acceptance of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s invitation to all heads of the UN member states to participate in the independence celebrations of the first state of the new millennium. Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors, heads of International Organisations, and an assortment of more or less famous people from cultural, media, and academic life from all over the world gathered for the occasion. Among the political hot shots were Portugal’s President Jorge Sampaio, Prime Ministers John Howard from Australia, Helen Clark from New Zealand, Junichiro Koizumi from Japan, and the U.S. representative, former President Bill Clinton, as envoy of current President George W. Bush.¹

In the afternoon, the foreign VIPs together with more than 120,000 locals all gathered at Tasi Tolu. The proceedings began at 6 pm with a solemn Mass presided over by Dili Bishop Felipe Ximenes Belo.² When Mass was over, traditionally clad warriors brandishing katanas (swords) on kudas (Timor ponies) performed, stampeding into the arena, followed by an indigenous welcome of great variety - music, dance, costumes - from all thirteen districts of East Timor. During all of this, a huge purple crocodile with a little boy riding on its back circulated the arena in celebration of the island’s creation myth.

Then the lights were turned off and everybody quietened. A somber mood ensued, with a recitation of one of Francisco Borja da Costa’s poems whilst children dressed in white held candles. A traditional lament for those that died during the struggle was followed, and contrasted, by a show of force by marching Falintil freedom fighters.

José Ramos Horta then held a speech of welcome and thanks to all those present or absent who had assisted in the struggle. When Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri arrived on the scene, Horta interrupted his speech and asked the crowd to greet her. Xanana Gusmão took Megawati’s hand and held it up in the air. The crowd cheered in response.³ Then there followed a youthful dance tribute to the future of East Timor.

At 23.45, Kofi Annan held a short but emotional speech, in which he compared his excitement now with those that he had felt when his own country, Ghana, was declared independent 45 years earlier. He also paid tribute to all those ‘who are no longer with us’, and saluted the courage and perseverance of those who persisted in the struggle for independence. He ended his speech with a reminder that independence is not an end, but rather the beginning of self-rule, which requires compromise, discipline, and, above all, unity.

At midnight, the light-blue UN flag was lowered, while world-renowned classical singer Barbara Hendricks sang a medley of two old Afro-American songs, “Oh, freedom” and ‘We

² Belo refused to say Mass during the independence ceremonies unless Fretilin officials dropped their plan to change the name of Dili’s main street, Avenida Bispo do Medeiros, named after a Catholic missionary, to Avenida Nicolau Lobato (Jill Jolliffe, ‘Bishop quits among talk of Vatican rift’, The Age, Melbourne, November 28, 2002.) Both sides had their way in the end; the street kept its old name, but Dili international airport was instead named after the resistance hero.
³ During Megawati’s brief stay in Dili, Indonesian navy gunboats made their ominous presence known on the horizon from the Dili waterfront.
shall overcome’. The flag of Timor-Leste was then brought forth by a Falintil soldier, escorted by six others. Parliament President Francisco “Lu-Olo” Guterres declared East Timor’s birth as an independent nation, and the flag was raised. During the slow ascendency of the flag, ‘Pátria, pátria’ the East Timorese national anthem, written and composed for the declaration of independence on 28 November, 1975, was sung. When the flag reached its apex, fireworks exploded over the heads of the crowd. Lu-Olo then proceeded to swear in Xanana Gusmão as President of Timor-Leste. Xanana gave an emotional address to his nation. The following embraces between him and Kofi Annan, were covered by television and radio world-wide.4 The ceremonial part of the proceedings finished at 2 o’clock in the morning, but the celebrations continued unabated, with people dancing and singing until sunrise.

The following day, Xanana Gusmão took his place as president on a stage before the government building and swore in the new country’s first Prime Minister and its first government. One of those sworn in was Rogério Lobato, appointed Minister of Internal Administration; with the PNTL (Policia Nacional do Timor-Leste) and local government within his portfolio. Seemingly, the Fretilin leadership assumed that he was a lesser threat inside the government than outside.5 Children waving East Timor’s black, red and gold flag packed the lawns in front of the building, and the new East Timor Defence Force marched at the head of a grand ceremonial parade saluting their former commander, now president of independent Timor-Leste. The parade of soldiers was followed by marches by the infant police force and navy, school groups and dancers dressed as crocodiles.

At its inaugural session, the parliament adopted a resolution to join the United Nations and to sign all UN Human Rights Conventions. Immediately following the session, the Prime Minister and his counterpart from Australia signed a new Timor Sea Treaty and an exchange of notes, which replaced the provisions of the former interim arrangement, but continued the substance of the earlier arrangement.6 The first day of independence also saw a meeting of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, hosted by its newest member.

Many of those who had attended the celebration at Tasi Tolu had been travelling for days – many on foot - to witness the moment of independence. Now they were exhausted, hungry, cramped and tense at the possibility of last minute attacks by pro-Indonesian militia. The Timor-Leste Red cross worked round the clock for two days and nights, ferrying the many who collapsed to field hospitals run by the UN peacekeeping forces.

By the second day, most foreign guests had left. Also leaving was the UNAMET head, Sergio Vieira de Mello.7 He had quietly emptied his office from personal belongings and left Timor-Leste almost unnoticed. A little more than a year later, on 19 August 2003, de Mello – then as United Nations’ Special Representative in Iraq - was killed with 17 others of his team in an attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad for which Al Qaida subsequently claimed responsibility, specifically referring to his work in East Timor as a reason for targeting him.8

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4 Among the 400 journalists who had been accredited were Amy Goodman and Allan Nairn, who had both witnessed the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991, and subsequently had been among those who for years were active in “keeping the flame alive”, through radio programs that offered critical attention to East Timor’s freedom struggle and the role of the U.S. government in supporting Indonesia’s occupation.
5 Rees, op. cit., p. 393.
6 James Cotton, East Timor, Australia and Regional Order. London & New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 106. Just a week before the ceremony, the Howard government flew East Timor’s Prime Minister-elect Mari Alkatiri to Canberra in a VIP jet, for a meeting with met with Treasurer Peter Costello, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Defence Minister Robert Hill. They sought - unsuccessfully - to strong-arm him into committing to a treaty which ceded to Australia most of the Greater Sunrise Field.
7 UNAMET was after 20 May 2002 transformed into UNMISET (the United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor), with the overall aim of building the capacity of the new Government and administration to take over all functions.
8 Ibid.
The new Timor-Leste Government – together with the citizens of the new independent state - would from now on have to face and handle problems of quite a different nature than those met during the struggle for self-determination. Robert Putnam’s conclusion, in his famous study of how institutions develop and adapt to their social environment – in his case various regions of Italy - is that “where institution building (and not mere constitutional writing) is concerned, time is measured in decades.” Putnam also writes that “the performance of representative government is facilitated by the social infrastructure of civic communities and by the democratic values of both officials and citizens. Most fundamental to the civic community is the social ability to collaborate for shared interests.”

Max Weber, writing in the second decade of the twentieth century, took the example of China to show that a people, within a short time span, may qualify to be a nation by specific actions, as an ‘attainment.’ Without a doubt, the East Timorese celebration of independence was the pinnacle of a remarkable attainment. But, at least in theory, something that can be attained, might also be ‘unattained’; unity turn into fragmentation, collaboration turn into selfish or group-specific agendas, especially so when outside forces no longer pose a direct threat. Ernest Renan, in his classic *What is a Nation*, from 1882, presented his view of a nation as

a living soul, a spiritual principle. This spiritual principle is based on two circumstances, one with a foundation in the past, and one which is based on an ever repeating now, the present. The former is the common vestige of a rich heritage of memories, the latter is the consent of the present population to live together, to share the heritage of the past and carry it onwards.

Just before dawn on the third day of independence, the crocodile shook itself ever so gently, and the people woke up to face - each in his or her own fashion – the dreams, duties, drudgery and joys of everyday life. And the sun rose, and the litter from the festivities rustled softly in the morning breeze.

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10 Ibid, p. 182.
A selected bibliography


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