

3. Diplomacy

THE U.S. AND THE INDONESIAN INVASION

As revealed by intelligence communications on the events of 1974-76, the political leadership in both the United States and Australia had prior knowledge of Indonesian intentions including invasion. As such, Washington (and Canberra) together signaled Jakarta that it would not meet force with force. No role whatsoever was countenanced for Fretilin and the people of Timor in deciding their destiny. The documentary evidence, as presented below, reveals that the West connived with Indonesia, then sought to cover up its shabby complicity in the invasion and annexation of East Timor. This subterfuge not only owed to Indonesian public relations skills or “batik diplomacy,” nor even the ham-fisted controls of a military dictatorship – although there was plenty of that – but rested squarely with the way that, during the long Cold War years and even beyond, the Western democracies (U.S., UK, Australia) conspired to build consensus on the great international questions of the day in perplexing ways where the question of self-determination and/or human rights was concerned.

Intelligence on the Invasion

As a general statement, U.S. documents relevant to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor came into public purview in the early 1980s, with further declassifications down through the decades adding marginally to our knowledge. To a certain extent declassified Australian documents offer complimentary sources, but still no substitute for the U.S. versions which confirm a determinate U.S. role in the making of the East Timor tragedy. While, to be sure, key U.S. documents still remain declassified or highly censored, the U.S. position, including the role of U.S. President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, has long been known, notwithstanding the attempts of concerned international actors to minimize, deflect, or even whitewash the official accounts.

As exposed to audiences in the U.S. by Chomsky and Herman (1979, 391n), Australian intelligence was well aware of the Indonesian military activities in East Timor in late 1975 and there is no doubt that U.S. intelligence was privy to the information available in Australia although the Australian public was also the object of deliberate obfuscation. Besides mounting their own monitoring service, the concerned U.S. intelligence agencies also upheld links with their Indonesian counterparts. For instance, Assistant Secretary for State, Philip Habib, attended a 30 May 1974 meeting in Jakarta with General Ali Murtopo, Pertamina's General Ibnu Sutowo, the Indonesian Department of Defense and Security (Hankam), and deputy chief of intelligence, Benny Murdani. It may have been pure coincidence but, the following day, the UDT-Fretilin coalition collapsed. This was six weeks after its leaders had visited Jakarta (Roff, 1992, 33).

Documents coming into possession of Dale Van Atta and Brian Toohey and extracted in the Australian newspaper, *The National Times* (30 May-5 June 1982), not only chronicle events in East Timor between 11 August and 26 September 1975 but also point up an overarching U.S.

intelligence role dwarfing the Australian operation. Originally published in the CIA newspaper, The National Intelligence Daily, at the time of the invasion, they reveal conclusively that Washington had many months prior warning of Indonesian invasion plans. Moreover, under intelligence-sharing arrangements with Australia, a large part of the information was passed on to Canberra. The Australian Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) at Coonawarra, near Darwin, in turn, supplied the core of the U.S. intelligence radio intercepts (cf. Toohey & Pinwell, 1990, 169-71). Although never given wide publicity in the international press, these documents revealed incisively that Indonesia operated a two-track policy in its moves to annex East Timor. One arm of this policy, in place for more than a year before the outright invasion in December 1975, was a policy of clandestine warfare carried out by Indonesian Special Forces inside Timor, including possible terrorism. This was designed to subvert East Timor, either so it would fall into Indonesian hands, thus obviating the need for massive military intervention or, by provoking the very chaos that Jakarta used to justify the invasion, viz: "Indonesia's clandestine activities in Timor may lead to a more serious breakdown in law and order, forcing a military decision upon Suharto" (August 18). As part of the clandestine propaganda exercise, Indonesian intelligence officials actively courted the leaders of the pro-independence groups (especially members of the pro-independence Apodeti party) seeking to convince them that Timor could not be viable as an independent state and that they should join forces with Jakarta [Toohey and Pinwell 1990].

The fine line between clandestine activity, subversion, and outright invasion gradually became blurred, however. According to U.S. State Department sources published in the CIA newspaper on 17 September 1975, Indonesia had trained, organized, and covertly committed 650 Timorese irregular troops into Portuguese Timor to stem the advance of the pro-independence Fretilin forces. On 3-4 September they were joined inside Indonesia by two groups of Indonesian special forces,

100 men each. Indonesian President Suharto's apparent unwillingness to invade outright was tempered by the need to imaginatively conjure up a threat to Indonesian national security inside East Timor. In this endeavor he was no doubt coached by his U.S. interlocutors: "President Suharto continues to worry about an adverse reaction from the U.S., particularly since a move against Timor at this time would come only a few weeks after his visit to Washington" (18 August). Two days later, the newspaper reported, "President Suharto evidently is still delaying on a decision to authorize military action. Apparently, a major consideration on his part is that an invasion of Timor, if it comes, must be justified as an act in defense of Indonesian security" (20 August) [Toohey & Pinwell 1990]. The documents also specifically mention Indonesian sensitivity to any U.S. or Australian disapproval of its behavior towards Timor. As it turned out, neither the U.S. nor Australia chose to pressure the Indonesians to back away from a strategy of subversion in Timor, precisely the signal Indonesia chose to interpret as endorsement.

Intelligence on the actual invasion is no less revealing and was also exposed in *The National Times*. U.S. sources confirmed that, in early October, Malaysia provided Indonesia with a small quantity of arms and ammunition that could not be traced to any other foreign military assistance. On 7 October Indonesian special forces retook Batugade, forcing Fretilin supporters to withdraw towards Balibo. As reported by the State Department, wire service reports of this attack on a position two kilometers inside Portuguese Timor were denied by Jakarta. Such was Washington's intelligence on Indonesia's clandestine war of attrition that the CIA newspaper was able to predict with precision that an invasion would begin on 14 October by Indonesian forces wearing uniforms without insignia so as not to be identified as regulars (11 October) (van Atta & Toohey 1982).

There is no record whatsoever that the U.S. protested the use of U.S. supplied military equipment for the invasion of another country. Neither was Washington's protest audible when, by the end of October, it became known to the U.S. intelligence community that Indonesian forces had captured six border towns and were moving on Maliana. Neither did the U.S. choose to expose the Indonesia charade that such actions were committed by anti-Fretilin partisans. The CIA newspaper (November 29) also dryly observed that the Fretilin declaration of independence issued on 28 November was a desperate measure to focus international attention on the Indonesian invasion but also to create publicity prior to U.S. President Ford's imminent visit to Jakarta in the hope that it would inhibit Indonesia (Van Atta and Toohey 1982).

As planned, on 7 December 1975 Dili was attacked by a full scale military operation, beginning with a naval bombardment, followed by the landing of hundreds of paratroopers from Kostrad XVII brigade and a simultaneous landing by a battalion of marines. On 10 December, looking back over the previous weekend's events in Dili, namely the full-scale invasion, the National Intelligence Daily revealed that. "There is no doubt U.S. Military Assistance Program equipment was used and we could be in for part of the blame if the operation is not a quick success." Very clearly, the fate of the Timorese people was at no stage mentioned in the analysis, nor were such concepts as the right to self-determination or freedom from aggression even entertained.

Camp David (5 July 1975)

Declassified documents suggest that the fate of Timor was discussed (if not sealed) long before the invasion and the Presidential visit to Jakarta. This was at a meeting attended by, inter alia, Suharto, President Gerald Ford, and Henry Kissinger at Camp David, Maryland, on 5 July 1975. Suharto

himself brought up the topic of Portuguese Timor, proclaiming his support for “self-determination” but asserting in classic “Java-speak,” “if they wish to integrate with Indonesia as an independent nation, that is not possible because Indonesia is a unitary state. So the only way is to integrate into Indonesia.” He continued in language that Washington clearly understood that, “the problem is that those who want independence are those who are communist-influenced. Those wanting Indonesian integration are being subjected to heavy pressure by those who are almost Communists” (Memorandum of Conversation between President Ford and Suharto, 5 July 1975; Gerald R. Ford Library, National Security Archive Memorandum, Box 13, 5 July 1965).

Such language obviously found resonance in Washington, after the U.S. debacle in Vietnam and in the light of ascendancy of left-wing forces in Portugal and possible jeopardy of U.S. access to the Azores bases. In these documents, at least, there is no demurral from this view, nor is there any protest at the illegality of the projected invasion or incorporation or discussion on Portuguese sovereignty. Several other key documents track U.S. responses to the UDT coup. In a declassified State Department document of 12 August 1975, Kissinger assumed that an Indonesian takeover would take place “sooner or later” (The Secretary's Principal's and Regional Staff Meeting, 12 August 1975). Kissinger was also briefed by the CIA prior to his arrival in Jakarta with Gerald Ford on 5 December. Five broad axioms were mentioned:

“U.S. interests in Timor relate solely to our broader interests with respect to the principal parties involved – Portugal, Indonesia, Australia and Indonesia's ASEAN neighbors.

The longer military intervention drags on and the less decisive it is, the more decisive the action will be in the international arena...U.S. interests would appear to be best served by following Indonesia's lead on the issue of Portuguese Timor.

Portugal could well condemn Indonesia's actions and may take the matter to the Security Council.

Australia, only a week away from elections, is likely to be far more cautious but is unlikely to openly support Indonesia's moves.

Other countries in the area will be embarrassed by the move but will not wish to stand up and be counted.”

As Kissinger wrote in “Memorandum for the President” [undated but circa 5 December], Jakarta was concerned that a resource poor colony would be unviable economically, leaving it susceptible to “especially Chinese – domination.” He continued:

“A merger with Indonesia is probably the best solution for the colony if the inhabitants agree. Indonesia use of US-supplied weapons in an overt occupation of the territory, however, would contravene U.S. law. We have quietly pointed this out to GOI, and it appears to have been a restraining factor.”

Talking points for President Ford, were to acknowledge the problem that Timor poses for Indonesia and to appreciate Indonesian “restraint.” “Assent” of the inhabitants for merger was also deemed desirable (Gerald R. Ford Library, National Security Archive Memorandum). The fact of the matter

was, however, that Indonesia had already commenced covert operations to destabilize and occupy the territory, and that Indonesia's "assent" methodology would soon take form with the "Balibo Declaration" and the so-called "Act of Integration."

"Illegally and Beautifully:" The Kissinger/Ford visit to Jakarta

On 6 December 1975 President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met with Indonesian President Suharto during a brief stopover in Jakarta while flying back to Washington from a visit to Beijing. Aware of Suharto's plans to invade East Timor and concerned that the use of U.S.-supplied equipment would breach Congress' requirement that this was only approved for self-defense, Ford and Kissinger went to lengths to ensure that Suharto only acted after their departure from Jakarta. Such subterfuge merits the status of an "illegal and beautiful" operation, that became a byword for the U.S. Secretary of State in the mid-1970s.

Neither was the timing of the full scale invasion of Portuguese Timor nor the link between the invasion and the Ford visit lost upon the CIA analysts. The National Intelligence Daily predicted with accuracy that Indonesia would not initiate the invasion until after the Ford visit. The report also revealed that the Fretilin victory over UDT was viewed by Indonesia as an invitation to invade and that Suharto decided that Timor be invaded immediately lest the Fretilin State gain international recognition. Accordingly, Indonesian military commanders were advised that they need no longer attempt to disguise Indonesian involvement in the takeover (5 December) (Gerald R. Ford Library, National Security Archive Memorandum).

According to transcripts of State Department documents released to the private National Security Archives group on 26/1/01 titled “Ford-Suharto” meeting:

“Suharto offers “to establish peace and order for the present and the future in the interests of the security of the area and Indonesia. “These are some of the considerations, we want your understanding if we deem it necessary to take rapid or drastic action.”

Ford: “We will understand and will not press you on the issue, we understand the problem you have and the intentions you have.”

Kissinger asked Suharto, “Do you anticipate a long guerrilla war there?”

Suharto: “There will probably be a small guerrilla war. The local kings are important, however, and they are on our side. The UDT represents former government officials and Fretilin represents former soldiers. They are infected the same as the Portuguese army with communism” (Gerald R. Ford Library, National Security Archive Memorandum).

The U.S. and the Australia Connection

Writing in the National Times of 21-27 March 1982, Brian Toohey describes the alarums of the CIA over the Whitlam government during its final days, notably over its observed desire to obtain a peaceful resolution of the East Timor problem. Elaborating on this matter in their 1990 publication, Oyster, Toohey and Pinwell describe the extraordinary behavior of the CIA and its Australian allies in November 1975 at a time when Indonesia's subversion of East Timor was in advanced

preparation. They claim that the CIA's East Asia division under Theodore Shackley feared that Labor Prime Minister Whitlam was a threat to the Western alliance and, specifically, that Whitlam sought to close down the CIA's ground station at Pine Gap in central Australia. Shackley, accordingly, threatened to close down intelligence links unless Whitlam's attitude changed. This was the setting in which the CIA published its rebuke of Foreign Minister Willesee in *The National Intelligence Daily* of 5 November 1975, a publication prepared each morning for the President:

“Foreign Minister Willesee has reserved Australia's policy of non-involvement in Timor. He has publicly, if indirectly, rebuked Indonesia for its growing military intervention. In a Senate speech he said Indonesia had been informed that Canberra believes that solutions to the Timor problem ought to be sought through peaceful means free of interracial intervention. He offered to help arrange for decolonization talks in Australia. Willesee was responding to a demand by Labor Party left-wingers that Australia recognize the Leftist Fretilin organization as the de facto government of East Timor...The Whitlam government seems willing to risk important relationships with Indonesia and the U.S. in order to appease leftist forces within the Labor party during the current political turmoil” (Toohey and Pinwell 1990, 176-79).”

Such dark assessments might be counterpoised with the CIA's estimation of the worthiness of the incoming Liberal Country Party Government led by Malcolm Fraser. Besides effusions of praise for the Fraser government's more reassuring attitudes towards foreign investment, uranium export, and U.S. defense needs, it was recognized that maintaining congenial relations with Indonesia is proving to be the Fraser administration's first difficult foreign policy problem and with Indonesia's military intervention in East Timor as a major complication. Thus, while both the Whitlam and Fraser government were applauded for the willingness to accept a quick takeover, the take-over had

not been quick (as expected?). Against this background the U.S. was understanding of the problems of both Labor and Liberals in handling Australian public sympathy for Fretilin and the problems inherited by the Fraser government surrounding embarrassment over the leaked Embassy documents (National Times 28 March-5 April 1982, 20).

Denial and Cover Up

Kissinger consistently denied that any substantive discussion took place during the 6 December meeting in Jakarta with Suharto, facts controverted by subsequent releases of declassified documents. In answering back to Constancio Pinto and Allan Nairn twenty years later in August 1995, Kissinger claimed that he was only accidentally in Jakarta, viewed Timor as somehow analogous as Goa, and claimed to have only briefly commented upon the island at the airport (Hitchens 2001, 93-98). Denial also shaded into cover up of the truth, indeed a cover up that persists.

As Kissinger biographer Christopher Hitchens (2001, 100) has written, the “deniable” pattern of official behavior surrounding the invasion of East Timor does not dispose of or negate two important matters of legality touching the U.S. State Department. The first pertains to violation of international law by Indonesia against the jurisdiction of a NATO ally in Portugal (albeit a country whose decolonization program, Kissinger did not support). The second was the violation of the U.S. law which stipulated that weapons supplied to Indonesia were to be employed only for self-defense.

Decisive confirmation of the nature of the cover up, as much as the degree of culpability of U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger in the East Timor tragedy, is revealed in a “Secret/Sensitive

document” first published in 1990 in the U.S. journal, The Nation (20 October 1990). Relating to a conversation between Henry Kissinger, Assistant Secretary Philip Habib, Legal Advisor, Monroe Leigh, Under Secretary, Carol Maw, and Deputy Under Secretary, Lawrence Eagleburger, which took place on 18 December 1975, or twelve days after Kissinger's visit to Jakarta, the text speaks for itself and is reproduced in its entirety.

Kissinger: I want to raise a little bit of hell about the Department's conduct in my absence. Until last week, I thought we had a disciplined group; now we've gone to pieces completely. Take this cable on [East] Timor. You know my attitude, and anyone who knows my position as you do must know that I would not have approved it. The only consequence is to put yourself on record. It is a disgrace to treat the Secretary of State this way....

Habib: The cable will not leak.

Kissinger: Yes it will, and it will go to Congress too, and then we will have hearings on it.

Habib: I was away. I was told by cable that it had come up.

Kissinger: That means that there are two cables! And that means 20 guys have seen it.

Habib: No, I got it by back channel – it was just one paragraph double talk and cryptic, so I knew what it was talking about. I was told that Leigh thought there was a legal requirement to do it.

Leigh: No, I said it could be done administratively. It was not in our

interest to do it on equal grounds.

Sisco: We were told that you had decided that we had to stop.

Kissinger: Just a minute, just a minute. It will have a devastating impact on Indonesia. There's this masochism in the extreme here. No one has complained that it was aggression.

Leigh: The Indonesians were violating an agreement with us.

Kissinger: The Israelis, when they go into Lebanon – when was the last time we protested that.

Leigh: That's a different situation.

Maw: It is self-defense.

Kissinger: And we can't construe a Communist government in the middle of Indonesia as self-defense?

Leigh: Well...

Kissinger: Then you're saying that arms can't be used for defense.

Habib: No, they can be used for the defense of Indonesia.

Kissinger: Now take a look at this basic theme that is coming out of Angola. These SOBs are leaking all this stuff to [New York Times reporter] Les Gelb...I want these people to know that our concern in Angola is not the economic wealth or a naval base. It has to do with the USSR operating 8,000 miles from home, when all the surrounding states are asking for our help. This will affect the Europeans, the Soviets, and China. On the Timor thing, that will leak in three months and it will come out that Kissinger overruled his pristine bureaucrats – and violated the law. How many people in L [the legal adviser's office] know about this?

Leigh: Three.

Habib: There are at least two in my office.

Kissinger: Plus everybody in the meeting, so you're talking about not fewer than 15 or 20. You have a responsibility to recognize that we are living in a revolutionary situation. Everything on paper will be used against me.

Habib: We do that ...all the time.

Kissinger: This is not minor-league stuff. We are going to lose big. The President says to the Chinese that we're going to stand firm in Angola, and two weeks later we get out. I go to a NATO meeting, and meanwhile the Department leaks that we're worried about a naval base and says it's an exaggeration or aberration of Kissingers. I don't care about the oil or the base, but I do care about the African reaction, when they see the Soviets pull it off and we don't do anything. If the Europeans then say to themselves, if they can't hold Luanda, how can they defend Europe? The Chinese will say we're a country that was run out of Indochina for 50,000 men and is now being run

out of Angola for less than \$50 million. Where were the meetings here yesterday? Were there any?...How will the situation get better in six weeks?

Habib: They may get it cleaned up by then.

Kissinger: Am I wrong in assuming that the Indonesians will go up in smoke if they hear about this?

Habib: Well, it's better than a cut-off. It could be done at a low level.

Kissinger: We have four weeks before Congress comes back. That's plenty of time.

Leigh: The way to handle the administrative cut-off would be that we are studying the situation.

Kissinger: I know what the law is but how can it be in the U.S. national interest for us to give up on Angola and kick the Indonesians in the teeth? Once it is on paper, there will be a lot of FSO-6s [Foreign Service Officer, class 6] who can make themselves feel good, who can write for the Open Forum Panel on the thing, even though I will turn out to be right in the end.

Habib: The second problem, on leaking of cables is different.

Kissinger: No, it's an empirical fact.

Eagleburger: Phil, its a fact. You can't say that any NODIS [most restricted distribution] cable will leak, but you can't count on three to six months later someone asking for it [sic] in Congress. If it's part of the written record, it will be dragged out eventually.

Kissinger: You have an obligation to the national interest. I don t care if we sell equipment to Indonesia or not. I get nothing from it. I get no rake-off. But you have an obligation to figure out how to serve your country. The Foreign Service is not to serve itself. The Service stands for service to the United States and not service to the Foreign Service.

Habib: I understand that that's what this cable would do.

Kissinger: The minute you put this into the system you cannot resolve it without a finding [official policy statement].

Leigh: There's only one question. What do we say to Congress if we're asked?

Kissinger: We cut it off while we are studying it. We intend to start again in January.

[Secret/Sensitive Memorandum of Conversation, 18 December 1975, The Nation, 20 October 1990 reprinted in New Statesman and Society, 2 November 1990, p.19; Gunn with Lee 1994, 125-27; Hitchens 2001, 101-06].

The context of the cover-up is also explained by Albinski (1977, 101-03), writing in 1977. He noted that while Washington and Canberra were not unmindful of Indonesia's human and political

rights record in general, neither wished to see security assistance programs affected. Neither government construed Indonesian violations as part of a general systematic and oppressive pattern. Otherwise Indonesian military excesses committed in East Timor were seen as exaggerated by critics and were seen as specific to the act of consolidating Indonesian presence in the territory. The continued incarceration of the political prisoners (Tapols) was likewise seen as the legacy of a specific historical event. Ipso facto, Indonesia's progressive release of the prisoners was seen as a sign of reasonableness. On its part, Australia actually urged the U.S. to present human rights issues in a low key.

The shared conviction held by Australia and both the Ford and Carter administrations in the U.S. was that the situation was irreversible and that the territory be digested quickly. Australia and the U.S. together found plausible the Indonesian argument that a future radical regime in East Timor could promote instability or secessionist sentiment elsewhere in Indonesia. The comments of concerned U.S. officials on the invasion are of more than passing interest. As Daniel Moynihan, U.S. Ambassador to the UN at the time of the invasion, wrote in his memoir, *A Dangerous Place* (1978; 247):

“The U.S. wished things to turn out as they did and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no considerable success.”

While human rights and famine relief in Timor were the subject of U.S. Congressional enquiries in 1977, 1979, and 1980, and while a block of Congressmen kept up pressure on the Carter

Administration, during the long years of the Reagan and Bush administrations, the real issues were kept under wraps. For this, the U.S. press shares much of the blame. [see International Media]

The Clinton Administration

As taken up below, only the end of the Cold War and the Dili massacre stirred Congressional conscience and sporadically raised media awareness of the East Timor issue globally. The advent of the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton also buoyed hopes for supporters of East Timor's self-determination, especially as Clinton had reportedly mentioned the East Timor case in a campaign speech as “unconscionable.” But the Clinton Administration also drifted on East Timor, in part compromised by U.S. business interests and even a Jakarta lobby in the U.S., such as can be tracked in the petitions of such solidarity groups as ETAN (see International Solidarity).

In the wake of the 1991 Dili massacre, the U.S. Senate began to exert leverage on the U.S. on arms transfers. For example, on 8 September 1993, responding to an amendment forwarded by Senator Russel Feingold, the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Congress adopted an amendment to the Foreign Aid Authorization Bill which effectively threatened Indonesia's ability to acquire American weapons. Even so, this and other Congressional interventions were effectively circumvented, especially on military training exchanges. [see Arms Supply]

On 11-12 November 1994 Suharto hosted the annual conference of APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation). Heading the guests was U.S. President Clinton. Thirty Democrat and Republican congressmen signed a petition calling on Clinton to raise the East Timor issue. But U.S. business

deals loomed large on the agenda, namely an Exxon-Pertamina deal worth \$35 billion. Even so, three days before the Summit the meeting was upstaged by a dramatic break-in to the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta by 29 East Timorese, capturing international press attention. Clinton duly raised the East Timor issue before and during his visit, but clearly missed an opportunity to elevate the issue beyond platitudes on human rights (cf. Inbaraj 1995, 160). In 1996, U.S. media exposed Clinton's unethical Jakarta-connection. Dubbed the Riady-Lippo-Clinton scandal, it was revealed that the Democrat party had received substantial campaign funds from Indonesian businessman James Riady, son of the owner of Jakarta-based Lippo, a conglomerate linked to the Indonesian president (eg. William Safire, "The Asian Connection," *New York Times*, 7 October 1996).

Clinton at the Auckland APEC Summit (September 1999)

Although President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and Secretary of Defense William Cohen, had signaled their strong concerns at the outbreak of post 30 August 1999 ballot violence in East Timor through telephone calls to their counterparts, President B.J. Habibie, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and General Wiranto, the U.S. role was still not determinate in calling for international intervention. Only on 12 September 1999, in responding to the crisis, Clinton announced that the U.S. had suspended all military cooperation assistance and sales to Indonesia [see Military Assistance]. This was stated at the Asia Pacific Economic Community (APEC) Summit hosted in Auckland, New Zealand, on 11-14 September 1999. Clinton also stated that U.S. willingness to provide future economic assistance "will depend upon how Indonesia handles the situation from today forward." On 14 September Clinton stated that the U.S. was ready to supply "airlift, communications, and related capabilities" in support of an international security force for East Timor. Earlier, he had already ruled out U.S. peacekeepers. Working with the Australians,

Japanese, South Koreans and other APEC partners, Clinton's voice was obviously crucial at this juncture alongside the UN Security Council. [see United Nations]

AUSTRALIA AND THE INDONESIAN INVASION

If the United States played a determinant role in offering the go-ahead for the full-scale Indonesian occupation and annexation of East Timor, the “deputy sheriff” role of Australia was no less important. While, in the Australian setting, different state agencies evinced changes of emphasis, the overall result was the same, namely that Indonesia would be given the green light to clean up the map, to secure this strategic real estate and its valuable sea corridors and ocean resources for the Western alliance, and to wrest victory from the forces of Soviet imperialism such as was perceived to be occurring in Portugal's African colonies.

As a reading of leaked Australian documents reveals, this was a Kissingerian viewpoint swallowed lock, stock and barrel by both major political parties in Australia. The fetish for the big picture, however, was not necessarily shared by Australian media in their treatment of the Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor, a dissenting view shared by the non-parliamentary wing of the Australian Labor Party along with a broad spectrum of liberal opinion. Nevertheless, as shown, such creative dissonance was not allowed to detract from the sober security perspective of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs [and Trade] [DFAT] bureaucrats who worked hard from the outset to bilateralize the erstwhile international problem of East Timor. Once Washington had given the nod, Jakarta and Canberra became the fulcrum for future discussions on East Timor. Publication by DFAT of such documentary collections as *Australia and the Indonesia Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976* (2000), have not detracted from the broad analysis achieved down

through the decades by a number of journalists and authors, based upon leaked documents and other sources.¹ As shown by a scrutiny of the relevant intelligence communications on the events of 1974-76, the political leadership in both Australia and the U.S. had prior knowledge of the Indonesian invasion. As such, Canberra and Washington together signaled Jakarta that it would not meet force with force. No role whatsoever was countenanced for Fretilin and the people of Timor in deciding their destiny.

The Security Fetish

In the first comprehensive attempt to explain Australia's acquiescence in Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, Denis Freney has shown how two spheres of an Australian operation to influence events inside East Timor and in a way which would exclude Fretilin from shaping that territory's destiny intersected. These two major links were the intelligence networks Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO)-CIA-Indonesian Intelligence Coordinating Agency (BAKIN) and the various concerned multinational oil companies, Woodside-Burmah, British Petroleum, Oceanic, Timor Oil and Thiess-Petrosea (Freney 1975). One link between these two circles, Freney explains, was a number of the Australian ex-commandos who had fought in East Timor during World War II and who had kept up sentimental links with Timor over the years. Notable was Brigadier B.J. Callinan. Callinan, a Catholic of extreme right wing views. As a director of a Melbourne-based engineering consultancy firm and as a director of British Petroleum (Australia), Callinan also had links with Woodside-Burmah and Timor Oil, both engaged in the search for oil in Timor. Thus when UDT President, Francisco Lopez da Cruz, and Vice President Cesar Augusto Costa da Mousinho arrived in Australia in April 1974 they were advised by Callinan to break off their alliance with Fretilin and to form an anti-communist alliance with the pro-Indonesian party, Apodeti. Both agreed and the

break with Fretilin occurred soon after their return to Timor thus overruling the objections of other UDT leaders, Domingos Oliviera and João Carrascalão (Freney 1975).

The UDT leaders also found allies in the director of JIO, Sir Gordon Jockel. According to Freney (1975), JIO had shown increasing interest in East Timor throughout 1974. As such; it relied heavily on the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University (ANU). The darling of the Centre at this time, he confirms, was Peter Hastings a product of the Cold War journalism of the late Forties and Fifties and a man with deep links with military intelligence services including the predecessors of JIO. While Hastings and JIO had originally supported an independent East Timor governed by a party modeled along the lines of the Pangu Pati of Papua New Guinea and, while Hastings had arranged for Jockel to meet José Ramos-Horta in December 1974 when visiting Australia at the invitation of Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET), with the defeat of General Antonio de Spínola's coup in Lisbon on 11 March 1975 and with the political gains made by Fretilin, JIO and Hastings switched their support. Now they championed the view that UDT should align with Apodeti and seize independence with guarantees from Indonesia. Freney also adduces other bits of evidence to suggest meddling on the ground in Timor by right wing activists acting under the cover of a humanitarian aid organization. Allegations made by the Indonesians that rightist Australian groups had offered arms to UDT and subsequently refuted in the National Times (25-30 August 1975) may not, according to Freney, have been far from the mark. From all this, Freney concludes, the evidence points to JIO being involved not only in the UDT split from its coalition with Fretilin but also with the launching of the coup of 10-11 August.

As Toohey and Pinwell (1990, 169-71) point out, by August 1971 East Timor was deemed to be officially irrelevant to Australia and the Consulate was closed down. This was despite the fact that some Australian oil exploration companies had considered the area to be sufficiently prospective to obtain drilling permits from the Lisbon government. Through the latter half of 1974 and the first half of 1975, then, when good intelligence on Timor seemed imperative, Australian policy on this area failed. In the absence of the consular post, both Foreign Affairs and Defence operated in a vacuum. As revealed by the Hope Report, in late 1974, JIO director Jockel sought the assistance of Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) on a host of political, economic and military matters relating to Timor. ASIS, under the impetus of the Defence Department under Arthur Tange, then tasked its Jakarta station to produce specific intelligence on the province with some success. Eventually this situation led to the recruitment of an agent in situ in Timor, and later provided the setting of Australia's first intelligence scandal. The concerned agent, the most notorious traveler-agent engaged by ASIS, was Frank Favaro who ran a pub in Dili in the early 1970s. It transpires, however, that other agencies JIO, Foreign Affairs and ASIO as well as unnamed foreign agencies were falling over each other in Dili (Toohey and Pinwell 1990, 177).

It is of interest that ASIS, the Australian equivalent of the American CIA and Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and a product of the Cold War, acquired a sporadic interest in Portuguese Timor dating back to 1959. Until withdrawn in January 1962, ASIS subsequently dispatched a full-time officer to Dili. Intelligence collection was continued by James Dunn who came to his External Affairs posting in Dili in 1962 from DSD. In turn Dunn had four successors at the Consulate subsequent to his departure in 1964 and prior to its closure (Toohey and Pinwell 1990, 177).

While Australia launched into criticisms of Portuguese colonialism in the dying days of the McMahon Liberal Government, support for anti-racist and anti-colonial movements became one of the cachets of the Whitlam Labor government when it came to power in December 1972. But, as Helen Hill (1985, 353) has written, such progressive sentiments were crosscut with Labor's move towards better bilateral relations with the ASEAN countries and particularly Indonesia. While the Liberals had been equally concerned with good neighborly relations, unlike Whitlam's version of “batik shirt” diplomacy, they had put far greater store upon working in concert with the UK and the U.S. in the context of alliances. But up until Whitlam's visit to Indonesia in September 1974, writes Hill, the Labor Party came to power with no policy on Portuguese Timor.

While the reopening of the Australian Consulate in Dili was actually recommended by a Labor Party delegation that visited the Portuguese colony on 16 March 1974, Whitlam reportedly responded that this could be misinterpreted, that political interests in Portuguese Timor could seek to use an Australian presence “to involve us to an extent that I do not feel would be appropriate for Australia.” As we now know, the absence of an official Australian presence in Dili sent entirely the wrong signals to Indonesia, unless of course that was the intended result of the closure and the failure to reopen the mission.

The Canberra-Jakarta Dialogue

In this respect we should not ignore the nature of the Canberra-Jakarta dialogue on Portuguese Timor conducted at the highest levels. This is a reference to the secret diplomacy on East Timor carried out by Gough Whitlam in two separate meetings with Indonesian President Suharto, the first at Wonosobo in central Java in September 1974 and the second at Townsville on 4 April

1975.2 As Hamish McDonald (1980, 195) has written of the first meeting, it allowed Suharto to gain advantage on the East Timor question. At this meeting, according to McDonald, Whitlam told the Indonesian President that he thought the best solution would be for East Timor to join Indonesia although adding the caveat that the wishes of the East Timor people should be respected and that Australian public reaction would likely to be hostile. But, as McDonald underscores, it was not so much what was said but the degree of mutual understanding or *tepo seliru* achieved by the two leaders. As such, Whitlam may have entered the history books as the first Australian statesman to have, unwittingly or not, endorsed the ASEAN ground rules on non-interference in a members state's internal affairs.

James Dunn has observed of the Townsville meeting that Whitlam's position was unchanged even though he would now have been apprised of Operasi Komodo or the Indonesian operation to militarily occupy Portuguese Timor, then under way, from diplomatic and intelligence sources. While Whitlam was supported at Townsville by key Foreign Affairs advisors, Dunn found it significant that the Australian Prime Minister was not accompanied by representatives of the Department of Defence even though a clutch of Indonesian Generals including leading operator and deputy head of BAKIN, Ali Murtopo, did attend the session. In this respect Whitlam was determined that his version of “batik shirt” diplomacy was not overruled by conflicting viewpoints from within the bureaucracies (Dunn, 1983, 151). While the DFA well understood that Indonesia remained unshaken in its resolve to take over the territory, Whitlam apparently accepted at face value Suharto's bland assurances that Indonesia had no such ambitions (Munster and Richard Walsh, 1975, 1980, 189; Dunn, 1983, 158.)

The foregoing raises the question as to why the Wonosobo meeting happened at all. No doubt the reasons are various, but one analyst, Roff, attributes the Wonosobo meeting to the influence of the then First Political Officer in the Australian Embassy, Geoffrey Forrester a known supporter of the Ali Murtopo faction who had originally urged the encounter. In the event, Forrester surfaced again as First Political Officer in charge of the Timor question at the Australian Mission at the UN through 1975, 1976 and 1977 (Roff, 1992, 14).

The strongest statement in condemnation of Whitlam's secret diplomacy at Townsville was by the former Foreign Affairs diplomat, Gregory Clark, who alleged in the *National Times* (22-27 March 1976) that Australian policy in the pre-invasion period could only have encouraged the pro-invasion clique in the Indonesian leadership at the expense of the moderates. As most of the pressure for invasion came from hawks in the Indonesian military, he asserted, Australia may have guaranteed their greater dominance in the Indonesian leadership by encouraging their success. In the event, the statement by Labor Foreign Minister Don Willesee in October was the last act of the Labor Government in the Timor dispute. The Liberal-Country Party coalition took over the Government on 11 November 1975 with caretaker status. According to Viviani (1976, 221), existing policies were maintained until the elections of 13 December 1975 returned them to power. She concedes that the timing of the invasion may have been related to the progress of Indonesia's negotiations with the U.S. for arms in October and November even before the Ford-Kissinger visit. But neither would the apparent vacuum in power in Canberra nor the Darwin cyclone, which knocked out communications in the Australia-Timor area, have discouraged the Indonesians from invading. But, while the policy-makers may have been consumed with other matters, the Canberra-Jakarta bureaucracies were on steady course.

Intelligence on the Invasion

The CIA newspaper also specifically mention Indonesian sensitivity to any U.S. or Australian disapproval of its behavior towards Timor. As it turned out, neither the U.S. nor Australia chose to pressure the Indonesians to back away from a strategy of subversion in Timor, precisely the signal Indonesia chose to interpret as endorsement. Indeed, the documents refer to President Suharto drawing support from the attitude of the then Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam on Timor. “Embassy contacts agree that Suharto is “mystically sure Timor will eventually become Indonesian. Thus drawing support from Whitlam's declaration of Australian non-intervention, he awaits a specific Portuguese request for him to take action” (August 28). [Van Atta and Toohey, 6-13 June 1982].

In the event, the predicted Portuguese request failed to materialize (Lisbon would only countenance a multilateral military operation including Australia but not a unilateral Indonesian presence). Undoubtedly the failure on the part of Australia to acquiesce in the solicitations of the Portuguese special envoy sent to Canberra, Almeida Santos, strengthened Indonesian, at least Indonesian military resolve, to go it alone. As The National Times commented upon the invasion documents, the fate of the Timorese people was at no stage mentioned in the analysis, nor were such concepts as the right to self-determination or freedom from aggression.

Additionally, as unmasked by Desmond Ball in his study on American defense installations in Australia, considerable constraints were placed upon Australian autonomy by the UK-USA relationship, a secret treaty involving the U.S., UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand set up in 1947. Again it was the Indonesian invasion of East Timor which provided an example of the

illegitimacy of certain aspects of the relationship. Evidence provided by SIGINT (Signals Intelligence and which in turn answers to the U.S. National Security Agency) revealed at least an Indonesian brigade level force in operation in East Timor in support of UDT well before the announced invasion of December 1975. Paradoxically, however, because SIGINT was the source, the government would not act upon it. The SIGINT intercept made known to the concerned authorities in Australia information on the deaths of the Australian journalists at Balibo, within hours of the event. Back in Canberra the politicians wished to inform the families of the deaths but the defense establishment was adamant that this would betray the principle of keeping DSD operations secret. This was “a quite illegitimate extension of the secrecy argument,” Ball contends, as the Indonesians cannot have been ignorant of the monitoring operation (Ball, 1980, 48-49).

Australia, East Timor, and the Secret Cables

As Chomsky and Herman record in their 1979 book, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, Richard Woolcott, who took up his position as Australian Ambassador to Indonesia on 10 March 1974, sent on 17 August 1975 his now well-known secret cable to the then head of the Australian Foreign Affairs Department, Alan Renouf. First leaked to *The Canberra Times* in January 1976, the cable makes it clear that Indonesia had decided on military action to annex the territory even prior to Woolcott assuming the Jakarta post. Indeed, Woolcott, who also accompanied Whitlam to his meetings with Suharto in both Wonosobo and Townsville in the capacity of Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, had been less than discrete in making known his views on the destiny of East Timor to his Indonesian interlocutors.

The “Woolcott Doctrine,” as such, became elaborated in a number of key official documents leaked to the Australian media. Inter alia, in an infamous turn of phrase, Woolcott recommended “a

pragmatic rather than a principled stand because that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about: As I stressed in Canberra last month, we are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor as even Malik admitted to me on Friday.”

In a gloss on the leaked cable published in the Melbourne Age, Woolcott is reported as saying that Australia must accept Indonesia's incorporation of the colony and not take issue with Jakarta on matters of principle, that Australia was in at least twelve months notice of Indonesia's intentions to take Timor by force, that Indonesia had been seeking private support from Australia for its policy on incorporation, that the Australian government privately endorsed Indonesia's goals apropos incorporation and that the Federal Government should not only follow a line that runs contrary to public opinion but should play a role in changing opinion. The extract continued:

“Indonesia still wants to know whether, privately, we still sympathize with their objectives (incorporation of Timor), even if we cannot condone the means they have adopted in pursuing it. [a reference to the Wonosobo and Townsville meetings which Indonesia felt had been jeopardized by Australia's, albeit mild, statements at the UN].

We believe the emphasis should now be on accepting the inevitability of Timor's incorporation into Indonesia, letting the dust settle and looking ahead, while taking what steps we can in Australia to curb the growth of further hostility towards Indonesia within the Australian community.

“The Government is confronted by a choice between a moral stance, based on condemnation of Indonesia for the invasion of East Timor and on the right of the assertion of the inalienable right of

the people of East Timor to self-determination, on the other hand, and a pragmatic and realistic acceptance of the longer term inevitabilities of the situation on the other.

It is a choice between what might be described as Wilsonian idealism and Kissingerian realism. The former is more proper and principled but the longer term national interests may be served by the latter – we do not think Australia can have it both ways.”

Needless to say, the publication of extracts of the cable in the Australian press created a public uproar and severely embarrassed the government of the day. Neither the Liberal Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser nor his Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock, would comment (see Roff, 1982, 66). Extended transcripts of the Woolcott cables eventually appeared in the work by two Australian academics, G.J. Munster and Walsh, *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1968-1975* (1980). When, on 8 November 1980, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* planned to publish extracts from this book, injunctions were taken out by the High Court and the articles were withdrawn after the first editions. Injunctions invoking the body of law relating to confidentiality and copyright were also served on the authors and the distributors, but not before a proportion of the print run had been sold to the book trade. This story is told in a subsequently published book by the same authors, *Secrets of State: A Detailed Assessment of the Book they Banned* (1982), minus the documents but with detailed contextualization on the documents themselves. In seeking to clarify the questions posed by the interplay between elected and permanent politicians, the book(s) provide vivid even lurid revelations on the making of Australian foreign policy in general. But on East Timor specifically, as Munster and Walsh write in *Documents*, the consistent theme that emerges through the cable traffic from Jakarta to Canberra is one of departmental or interdepartmental policies diverging from those of governments. But on East Timor, they continue:

“The single clear point which emerges from the original documents written during the Timor crisis is that diplomats make their own policies, particularly when ministers are not in full agreement.”

It should be remarked that the Woolcott cable of 17 August 1975 was in response to the knowledge that Prime Minister Whitlam might communicate to Suharto Australia's opposition to the use of force by Indonesia. It should be recalled that 17 August 1975 was ten days after Indonesian forces invaded and captured the East Timor border post of Batugede, three days after Maliana was captured by Indonesian invaders and, shockingly, one day before the five Australian television journalists were murdered by Indonesian forces at Balibo. It also came at a time when Fretilin rallied to roll back the UDT coup d' état in Dili, launched with probable Indonesian connivance the week before.

As Walsh and Munster (1980) explain, an Australian head of mission like Woolcott answers directly to the Minister in Canberra and notionally is outside the formal hierarchy of Foreign Affairs. As a result there was no conflict between head of mission and the head of division covering the country in question. As such, Woolcott's voice was a key voice in the traffic between Jakarta and Canberra, even though, as alluded below, Woolcott subsequently sought to play down his importance as a diplomatic player on Timor. The Woolcott cable continued:

“It is of course a decision for the Minister [Senator Willesee] and the Prime Minister [Gough Whitlam] but I am somewhat concerned about the proposal that the Prime Minister might send a message to the President.

As I stressed in Canberra last month we are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor. As even Malik [Adam Malik], Indonesian Foreign Minister] admitted to me on Friday...I believe that Indonesians are well aware of our attitudes to Timor at all levels.

I am sure that the President would not welcome another letter on the subject at this stage, especially after what he said publicly in Parliament only yesterday...Suharto will be looking to Australia for understanding of what he, after very careful consideration, decides to do rather than what he might regard as a lecture or even a friendly caution.

Other alternatives to a message – although I would also not recommend them – would be an answer to a question in the House or a statement, possibly at a press conference. These could assert that Australia cannot condone the use of force in Timor, nor could we accept the principle that a country can intervene in a neighboring territory because of concern, however well based that concern might be, over the situation there. At the same time such an answer to a question in parliament or from the press could concede that Indonesia has had a prolonged struggle for nation unity and could not be expected to take lightly a breakdown in law and order in Portuguese Timor. Especially when the colony is surrounded by and geographically part of the Indonesian archipelago.

We are all aware of the Australian defense interest in the Portuguese Timor situation but I wonder whether the Department has ascertained the interest of the Minister of the Department of Minerals and Energy in the Timor situation. It would seem to me that this department might well have an interest in closing the present gap in the agreed sea border and this could be much more readily negotiated with Indonesia by closing the present gap than with Portugal or independent Portuguese Timor.

I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand but that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about, as even those countries with ideological bases for their foreign policies, like China and Soviet Union, have acknowledged.”

In the event, Whitlam did not send another cable to Suharto. The deaths of the Australian journalists at Balibo remained one of the great cover ups and conspiracies of the East Timor (at least for Australia) but entirely in line with Woolcott's reading of the Indonesian President's fervent wishes (cf. Jolliffe 2001).

All in all, according to Dunn, (1983, 142, 149) the day-to-day handling of the Timor question in Australia became confined to a small coterie of DFA and JIO officials along with staffers in the Embassy in Jakarta. As the crisis deepened, so the handling of the crisis became tighter. It could also be said that, with the first leaking of the cables in January 1976, paranoia in Canberra increased. Press disclosure was answered with higher levels of official closure and obfuscation, and, with rare consistency, a pattern which persisted on matters surrounding East Timor, at least down until September 1999.

While much has been made of the political confusion in Australia in the aftermath of the constitutional coup d'état that saw the Whitlam government ousted at the end of 1975 and the Opposition returned to office, the Indonesians had no cause for alarm. The contingency of a change of government was well prepared. From an Indonesian perspective, Anglo-Australian understanding of its standing vis-à-vis Portuguese Timor would not be complete without the tacit endorsement of the Opposition. To this end, in May 1975, the head of BAKIN, Lt.General Yoga

Sugama, made a key visit to Australia where he sounded out and met, evidently to his satisfaction, inter alia, leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Fraser (McDonald 1980, 204). Liberal Party spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, was also the target of Indonesian intelligence (cf. National Times (2-7 May 1977)).

Woolcott Revisted

Not surprisingly, Richard Woolcott (2003, 144-45) defends the bipartisan policies of the Whitlam and Fraser governments in 1976 towards East Timor as “appropriate and in Australia's national interest at that time.” In lashing out at armchair critics “partially informed academics” etc., Woolcott takes cover in a style reminiscent of the master, Henry Kissinger. To wit, “Complex situations are often reduced to simple propositions that through repetition take root in a partially informed community.” In fact, Woolcott replays the Goa argument “The closet parallel would not be Iraq but India's annexation by force of Goa,” an argument also retailed by Kissinger. Woolcott is disingenuous in arguing that, reaching back to the Liberal-Country Party government under Prime Minister R.G. Menzies continuing through the Whitlam era, that Australia wished to see an appropriate act of self-determination in East Timor. Even if true, it is hard to square this assertion with the statement that it would be “naïve to postulate that Australia could have mounted a diplomatic campaign that could have changed the course of events in the second half of 1975.” Woolcott (2003, 156) allows that it was easier to negotiate the seabed boundary between Indonesia than Portugal or independent East Timor but, contrary to a great deal of evidence surrounding the Timor Gap Agreement with Indonesia, as discussed below, he doubts that oil was an Australian motive. Woolcott states that he regrets the suffering and deplores Jakarta's “maladministration” of

the territory, but he could not have been naïve to Jakarta's pogroms in 1965/66, or TNI methods and practices.

The Australia Defence Department View

While Woolcott had emerged as the key voice in the cable traffic between Jakarta and Canberra, the Australian Department of Defence was not altogether mute and was also involved at a senior level. As revealed by the leaked documents, the Minister for Defence in the Whitlam Government, Lance Barnard, also communicated his concerns as to an Indonesian invasion to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Willesee. The Defence view was given intellectual force by W.B. Pritchett, then First Secretary and head of the Strategic and International Policy Division of the Defence Department in a minute sent to the Minister on 9 October 1975. In his words:

“Basically, as identified by the Foreign Affairs Department already last December, we have pursued incompatible lines of policies – that Portuguese Timor should be integrated into Indonesia but that there should be an act of self-determination and that Indonesia should not effect integration by coercion. Since the weight of evidence from the outset has been that any act of self-determination would oppose integration, in effect what we have offered Indonesia with the one hand we have sought to deny them with the other.”

As a result, he continued, Australia would have to reckon with a radically changed perception of Indonesia for years to come if the invasion was countenanced. The conclusion was that Indonesian-Australian relations would only be strengthened and better served by an independent East Timor.

Prichett's contention that Fretilin had to be reckoned with, however, was a dissenting view outside of elite consensus and, accordingly, consigned to history.

The Canberra Cover-Up

As stated, and as reiterated by Chomsky and Herman (1979), Australian intelligence was well aware of the Indonesian military activities in East Timor in late 1975 and there is no doubt that the U.S. intelligence was privy to the information available in Australia although the Australian public was also the object of deliberate obfuscation.

According to Bruce Juddery, writing in *The Canberra Times* (31 May 1976), Woolcott had cabled advice to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs on 29 October 1975 that Australian knowledge of Indonesian intervention be concealed. It transpired that in the way of avoiding complications with Indonesia, a Ministerial statement had been altered the year before to conceal the fact that Australia knew Indonesian troops were active in East Timor, more than a month before the all-out Indonesian invasion of the territory on 7 December. Juddery's conclusion was that the mounting body of evidence proved that Australia not only had foreknowledge of the Indonesian invasion but actively collaborated in plans to integrate East Timor with the republic.

Gregory Clark (cited in Roff, 1992, 107) alleged that the Australian mission had cooperated with the Indonesians to ensure that Fretilin appeals to the UN in the weeks prior to the invasion were shelved. Further, he alleged, Australia had deliberately failed to give procedural support for the Fretilin case, even though it played a prominent role in the UN Decolonization Committee. Moreover, Foreign Affairs advised its Mission in New York to abstain in the initial General

Assembly vote. While this was overruled by Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock, his role in the Timor sellout, as seen, was not entirely blameless.

It was also notable that no special effort was made by Canberra to answer the Indonesian disinformation campaign that alleged that Fretilin was communist and that an independent East Timor was an invitation for a Soviet base in the region. One journalist who listened to Fretilin was Bruce Juddery. As Fretilin spokesperson on foreign affairs, José Ramos-Horta, answered back to Juddery (*Canberra Times*, 18 April 1975) on this vexed question:

“We have already given assurances, indications to the Australian government, the Indonesian government, that our policy will be one of non-alignment with any of the big powers...We are very aware of our geopolitical situation and that we must suit our policy to Australia and the Indonesian government. We are very strongly opposed to the idea that East Timor can be used as a base for any of the big powers.”

Chomsky and Herman conclude that the primary difference between Australia and the U.S. in respect to the cover-up is that in the U.S. the cover-up continued in the media as well (and, of course, direct U.S. complicity by means of military and other support is far greater). But, they continue, the U.S. did not just react to Australian intelligence reports, it actively put pressure on Australia to recognize the Indonesian conquest and to swallow the problem of the massacres. To this end, Chomsky and Herman cite a Melbourne Age report of 3 August 1976 reporting that the U.S. has warned Australia not to allow further deterioration of relations with Indonesia over Timor. This referred to high level talks in Washington between Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and concerned officials of the Ford Administration. The article explained that the safest passage for

U.S. nuclear submarines from the Pacific to the Indian Oceans is through the deep water straits north of Timor island, the so-called Ombai-Wetar narrows which, if denied by Indonesia under its archipelagic concept, would cost the U.S. massive strategic advantage versus the Soviet Union. As the article put it, “Observers believe the strategic location of East Timor is one reason why the U.S. Administration has readily acquiesced to Indonesia's takeover of the disputed Portuguese colony and to its campaign to crush Left-wing Fretilin independence movement” (Chomsky and Herman, 1979, 63-64).

The same theme was taken up in the *Age* (4 August 1976) by Michael Richardson, who elaborated that because of the importance of these straits for U.S. strategic operations, the U.S. actually requested Australia in 1976 not to permit a further deterioration in relations with Indonesia over its annexation of East Timor. It could be argued that far from raising outrage at the Machiavellian dismissal of a people as pawns in a Cold War struggle, the insertion of such articles in the mainstream Australian press actually served a counter purpose, namely jolting a “responsible” Australian audience out of their bleeding heart naiveté to face up to the hard if unpalatable facts of life in the international power game. East Timor independence amen.

When in March 1977 the U.S. government solicited evidence before Congress on alleged atrocities in East Timor, it appears that the U.S., Australia, and Indonesia alike contrived to neutralize the testimony of former Australian Consul in Dili, James Dunn. Reportedly, the DFA called the Australian Embassy in Washington to say that it would welcome steps to have the Congressional inquiry handled jointly by the present sub-committee and the Asia and Pacific Affairs sub-committee. In a telling turn of phrase, the cable stated: “We agree with your feeling that the joint hearing might dissipate to some extent the intensity of criticism of Indonesia on human rights

violations.” In another Foreign Affairs cable, Richard Woolcott, recommended that the Australian delegation to the inter-governmental group on Indonesia should support continuing high levels of aid to Indonesia. As the diplomatic reporter for the Sydney Morning Herald, the paper which broke this story, wrote, “Both cables are seen as a clear indication that the Government wants criticism of Indonesia over East Timor kept to a minimum” (“Peacock to ‘defuse East Timor issue,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 1977).

In the event, the Fraser Government recognized Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor on 20 January 1978. Of this event, the Liberal Party Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock, stated, it would be unrealistic to continue to refuse to recognize de facto that East Timor was part of Indonesia. Six weeks later, Australia and Indonesia agreed to negotiate a permanent sea-bed boundary south of East Timor (Nicol, 1978, 317).

While continuing allegations of human rights abuses in East Timor prompted the Australian Senate to announce in October 1981 an enquiry on East Timor (the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence: East Timor), and while voluminous in camera testimony was collected from East Timorese refugees, eye witnesses and experts, at the end of the day, such recriminations led to nowhere as far as the East Timor self-determination question was concerned.

The Hawke Labor Government and the Timor Gap Treaty

While in opposition, the Labor Party had defended the withdrawal of Indonesian forces from East Timor along with an act of self-determination, with its electoral success in 1983, the Hawke

government reversed its position and fell in line with the Fraser government position on recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty. Under the putative foreign ministership of Gareth Evans, the Canberra government moved to cement its “Asia-links” policy with Jakarta, effectively scuttling discussion on East Timor sovereignty, and paving the way for the notorious and illegal Timor Gap Treaty, signed by Australian and Indonesia on 11 December 1989.

The “gap” was a legacy of a difference between Portugal and Australia over how the future law of the sea treaty – only entering into force in 1994 – would apply (cf. Suter 1995). Notably, on the eve of the Indonesian invasion of 1976, Richard Woolcott advised his department on the preferability of negotiations with Jakarta on the gap. We have observed the logic of the Fraser government in extending de jure recognition of Jakarta's annexation. In the event, this was both a precondition and a prelude to the signing and subsequent ratification of the Treaty by Australia and Indonesia. As Portugal responded to the signing of the Treaty:

“The Agreement constitutes a clear and flagrant violation of international law and of the UN Charter and many resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council do not recognize Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor, illegally occupied by military force since December 1975” (*Tapol Bulletin*, no.57, February 1990, 27).

This broad interpretation was supported by such international legal experts as Roger Clark (1992, 72; 85) who argued that the Australian government acted in breach of its international obligations by entering into the Timor Gap Treaty with Indonesia. Moreover, Australia had an international duty not to recognize the acquisition of territory through unlawful force.

In February 1991, Portugal instituted proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Australia over the Treaty, in lieu of Indonesia which does not accept the ICJ's jurisdiction.

Eventually, on 30 June 1995, the ICJ handed down its ruling. In this case, Australia won a Pyrrhic victory with the court ruling that it could not adjudicate the dispute owing to Indonesia's non-consent as to the Court's jurisdiction. The ruling did, however, reiterate an important principle, namely that, as Portugal defended, East Timorese had the right to self-determination.

Writing in 1995, political scientist Michael Salla offered a candid summary of the evolution of Australian foreign policy on East Timor over the previous two decades finding it:

“...firmly constrained by policies first laid down by the Whitlam government. The two most important [constraints] are: first, that the Australian government should avoid political intervention in the sense of mediating between the East Timorese and the Indonesians and helping resolve substantive issues of the conflict, and second, that the relationship with Indonesia is too important to be prejudiced by events in East Timor. While the colonial framework used by Whitlam to cast his East Timor policy was colored by his own interpretation of the region's history and geopolitics, his conclusion was shared by more “pragmatic” assessments of East Timor by key decision-makers at the Indonesia desk of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The result has been that successive Australian governments have responded to the exigencies of East Timor within the policy convergence achieved by Whitlam and senior Department of Foreign Affairs officials (Salla 1995, 221-22).

Envoi: The Australia Flip-flop

Notwithstanding the Habibie announcement of 9 June 1998 that he was considering “special status” options for East Timor, and a major push by the UN through to late 1998, the Australian government was still not in favor of a referendum on independence in East Timor at that juncture. In August 1998, the Australian government had conducted an informal review of East Timor opinion in the diaspora as well as inside the territory, finding almost no support for the idea of integration as the basis for autonomy (Marker 2003, 128). A shift in the Australian position was only discernible in the light of Prime Minister John Howard's 19 December 1998 letter to the Indonesian president, raising the possibility of a referendum in the distant future. More or less answering back to Jakarta, on 12 January 1999, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer finally conceded the East Timorese right to an act of self-determination (cf. Lloyd 2000, 87-89). But, by mid-1999, however, the focus in Australia had shifted to what political scientist James Cotton (1999, 3) calls the “security impact of the creation of a new and aid dependent close neighbor, or upon the consequences that a new political status for East Timor would have for the regions of Indonesia” in the post-Suharto era. “All of these matters were of the greatest importance to Australia,” Cotton continues, “and the choice of policy to deal with them and their implications has been a major national priority.”

But least we read pure altruism into the impetus behind Howard's letter, it is apposite to recall the principled role of Shadow Foreign Affairs Minister Laurie Brereton and his chief adviser Philip Dorling. By early 1998, Brereton took a proactive position towards East Timor gaining good traction in the Australian media and gaining resonance with an Australian public. Although Labor had adopted a new position on East Timor at its annual conference in Hobart in January 1998, former foreign minister Gareth Evans and former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam did not join the new consensus. But it was clear that the historic bi-partisanship that typified Australian politics

towards Indonesia and East Timor was now fractured, leaving Foreign Minister Alexander Downer back-footed. Brereton's critique of rising militia violence and increasing military presence in East Timor was electorally assisting Labor at the Howard government's expense. In this analysis, the Howard letter was not to pressure Indonesia for a referendum, but to "insulate and firewall" the Liberal Party from Brereton's successful encroachment on its popularity. Even so, Howard could take umbrage that he had supported some vague act of self-determination, even though he personally did not support it, and could not then have envisaged the outcome (communication from Andrew McNaughton).

But, Cotton (1999, 3) continues, for other Australians (many interest groups and publics), "the Timor debate was not so much about the future but about the past. The focus was on the record of successive governments in their handling of the Timor issue, but especially on the role then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam played – or did not play – in the events which led to the occupation of East Timor by Indonesian forces in December 1975. It was also, to that extent, focused not primarily upon Timor but upon Australia, and thus on the success and failure of leadership and political institutions."

Acknowledging that the Australian Timor "debate" underwent a 180 degree change in 1999, we also find it relevant to a "truth commission" assessment, to recall the past debate. As journalist Jill Jolliffe (2001, 3), has written of the Australian conversion in 1999:

"It was though in the blink of an eye Australian policy-makers had wiped the slate of their moral delinquency of 24 years. The Australian Defence Force played a leading and justifiably proud role in INTERFET... However, one could be forgiven in wondering when a reckoning was to be made

for the years of closed-door decisions on Timor, years of stubborn insistence by Australia's leaders that Indonesia had brought development and prosperity to the territory, and those who said otherwise belonged to a carping ideological fringe. How can future policy be formulated if the past is not analyzed?"

PORTUGAL AND THE LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES

As the former colonial power, and as the country charged with the decolonization of its former territory, Portugal's role in the East Timor question was germane, especially as the UN still considered Portugal as the de jure "administering power." But Portugal had to face down dismissive allegations from Indonesia and even Australia that it abandoned its former colony and people.

While it is true that in the decade following the invasion, Portugal proved helpless or ineffective as an interlocutor for the East Timor cause, a great deal of introspection and a rallying of interest especially by former President Mario Soares turned the tide of popular opinion as much elite action, eventually leading to Portugal's challenge of Australian claims to the Timor Gap in the World Court.³

The Portuguese Response in the Wake of the Invasion

Portuguese preoccupations in the mid-1970s were far from focused upon East Timor, especially given domestic political travails and the economic and political fallout stemming from the rapid decolonization of the African colonies. Perhaps the most stinging criticism of Portugal's inaction on

the East Timor self-determination question arises from the East Timorese leader most closely involved with defending the issue in international fora. This was José Ramos-Horta who wrote in *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (1987, 125-26; 129) that, from 1976 to 1982, Portuguese bureaucrats and diplomats simply shrugged their shoulders and accepted the occupation as a *fait accompli*. Alongside a concerted Indonesian public relations campaign, the Portuguese appeared as “pathetic bystanders,” offering no tangible support to East Timor's case at the UN. More than that, Ramos-Horta argues, if Portugal had worked harder to exploit its new democratic credentials in 1974-75, it is possible that Indonesia would not have used force against East Timor. Still, the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, the Portuguese withdrawal, and the aborted decolonization, demanded questions from the Portuguese public. One attempt to meet the demands of the Portuguese people for explanations was a series of *relatorio* or reports commissioned by the President of the Conselho de Ministros under the aegis of the “Comissão de Analise e Esclarecimento do Processo de Descolonização de Timor” established in 1977, although the findings were only published in 1981. The first was by former governor of Portuguese Timor, Mario Lemos Pires; and the second by Portuguese military personnel.

Only in 1982, under President Antonio Ramalho Eanes did Portugal begin to address the East Timor self-determination issue systematically. The Foreign Office and its diplomats were, accordingly, mobilized (Ramos-Horta 1987, 129). Also in 1982 the Portuguese National Assembly created the “Special Committee for the Accompaniment of the Situation in East Timor.” All political parties with a seat in the Portuguese parliament were represented. During the long years of the Indonesian occupation, the Committee served as the major parliamentary forum for debate on East Timor,

Among other activities the Committee facilitated the internationalization of the East Timor question by Portuguese deputies in various international fora. For example, from 1982, Portuguese deputies commenced to address the UN Committee of 24. From June 1986 Portugal joined the European Economic Commission (EEC) and, in June 1987, the European Parliament, offering new platforms for discussion of the East Timor question. Portuguese deputies also liaised with international Parliamentarians for East Timor groups (cf. *Os 25 Anos*, 2000). Among other activities conducted by the Assembly was the proclamation on 6 December 1990 of a “national day of solidarity for East Timor people.” Publications of the Committee are also eloquent of its commitment. Also, in 1995, the Lisbon Inter-parliamentary Conference on East Timor further contributing to keeping the East Timor question on the international agenda.

According to Jill Jolliffe,

“Portugal's accession to the European Community in January 1986 has provided politicians at all levels with an important international forum to fight for East Timor. President Soares has made use of it, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have made use of it, particularly by boycotting EEC events in Jakarta, and Portuguese members of the European parliament have used the parliament to particularly good effect. The importance of this forum should not be underestimated as Lisbon now has regular consultation with West European countries two of whom (Greece and Ireland) supported the 1982 UN resolution on East Timor while then other seven abstained” (*Tapol Bulletin*, no.80, April 1987, 2-3).

Jolliffe also explains that, up to the 1986 presidential election, President Eanes was seen as the most principled figure on East Timor, but once elected president Mario Soares was even more outspoken on East Timor than his predecessor, especially as a president from the Socialist Party

enjoyed close ties with the left-leaning coalition government of the day. But, writing in 1987, Jolliffe contended that no party in Portugal then opposed the self-determination principle for East Timor (*Tapol Bulletin*, no.80, April 1987, 2-3)

Portugal returned to center stage alongside Indonesia in the negotiations leading up to the 5 May 1999 New York Agreement on the conduct of an internationally monitored consultation on East Timor. Although technically Portugal withdrew its legal sovereignty over the half island pending the outcome, a necessary negotiating tactic to win Indonesian approval for the ballot, Portuguese diplomats remained engaged. Exemplary was the role of veteran diplomat Ana Gomes who, in mid 1999, headed up Portugal's special interest sector of the Netherlands Embassy in Jakarta, until appointed Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia.

Commission for Support for the Transition in East Timor (CSET)

Arising from the special conjuncture of the 3 May 1999 agreement, on 4 June 1999 the Commission for Support for the Transition in East Timor (CSET) was established by Decree Law 189/A/99, to “co-ordinate and implement support programs and actions” during the transitional period as defined by the 5 May agreements. Commissioner Vitor Melicias took office on 7 June with a brief to coordinate the various bilateral and multilateral support programs, initiatives and activities promoted by the Portuguese government and civil society groups.

CSET would involve itself with pre-referendum activities through to the August 1999 ballot, as well as engaging in humanitarian activities in the emergency period. In February-March 2001, the

8th Special Committee of CSET visited East Timor, Australia, and Indonesia to assess development needs, political evolution, refugee issues, Portuguese language needs, and development needs in general, leading to the creation of a technical assistance mission.

Civil Society Groups and Actions

Just as Portugal became host to a large (2000-strong) community of East Timorese repatriados, so numerous governmental and civil society agencies or groups were involved in their reception including, from 1981, the Comité des Réfugiados de Timor (CRT). Timorese themselves founded the Fundação Austronesia Borga da Costa (1986). In 1997 the Fundação Paz e Democracia Monsenhor Martinho da Costa Lopes was launched with the patronage of José Ramos-Horta.

Portugal also became a magnet for East Timorese political groupings, especially Fretilin and UDT, among other tendencies. To degrees, all raised the self-determination issue through political actions, networking with the Portuguese and East Timorese communities, and through media presentations, and publications. [see Media]

From an early period, the Portuguese state also offered support to East Timorese arriving in the metropolitan country. One initiative taken in 1974 was the establishment of the Casa de Timor, a living space for Timorese students in Lisbon, also serving as a base for political activists and as sponsor of cultural and even publishing activities. In the early 1990s, in an important initiative, the Município de Lisboa established the Espaço de Timor, a cultural center cum resource center and meeting place for Timorese as well as concerned Portuguese and international visitors and researchers located in a historic building near the Portuguese parliament. [See International Solidarity]

After the Dili massacre of November 1991, interest in East Timor again peaked. Among other civil society actions, university students from across Portugal linked with *Forum Estudante* magazine along with Missão Paz por Timor, established a support committee to raise money to charter the Portuguese ferry Lusitania Express with the intention to sail to East Timor to dramatize the abject situation. With the expected presence on board of former president Ramalho Eanes, the Lusitania Express venture raised major international media attention, especially when, on 11 March 1992, the risks involved dramatically escalated as the ship approached the island (McMillan 1992, 204-05; 214-16; Gunn with Lee 1994, 192-95).

Portugal at the UN

In 1987, after various contacts and negotiations, the Portugal parliament received an invitation from its Indonesian counterpart to send a delegation to East Timor and Lisbon opened talks with Jakarta to facilitate the visit. An accord was reached and signed three years later in September 1990 after very complex negotiations. Under UN cover the delegation would comprise Portuguese legislators, the Cuban, Tanzanian, and Norwegian representatives ambassadors to the UN acting as representatives of the UN Secretary-General. Under the terms, the mission was to be “fact finding but investigative.” Various other terms and conditions applied. The delegation was also to be accompanied by a specified number of journalists. As the delegation prepared to visit East Timor on 5 November 1999 hopes inside East Timor ran high. But, as history records, at the last moment Indonesia objected to the inclusion of certain journalists and made changes to the itinerary. On 26 October, as domestic opposition to the press ban grew, Portugal formally announced a suspension of the visit. In the absence of the Parliamentary visit, activists inside East Timor made the decision

to use the presence in Dili of UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Pieter Kooijmens, as the focal point for a demonstration (cf. Inbaraj 1995, 95-96). [see United Nations]

Talks between Indonesia and Portugal mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1982 were broken off shortly after the Dili massacre and did not resume until September 1992. Even so, such talks appeared to have been stalemated. In any case, it was not until incoming UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed a special representative for East Timor in February 1997 that Portugal once again emerged as key interlocutor between the UN, and Indonesia. [see United Nations].

Portugal's initiative at the ICJ in The Hague bears mention. Commencing proceedings on 22 February 1991, the IJC brought down its ruling in July 1995, that it could not rule upon the dispute by Portugal on Australia's exploitation of the Timor Gap. especially as Indonesia was not party to the Court and it could not rule on Indonesia's conduct. Importantly, however, the ICJ statement declared that East Timor “remains a Non-Self Governing Territory and its people have right to self-determination.” Australia's Pyrrhic victory and Portugal's affront was also a victory for international law and the rights of the East Timorese people (see Gunn 1997, 216-27).

Portuguese Macau

Until its handover to China in December 1999, Macau remained under Portuguese administration. The importance of Portuguese Macau to East Timor's liberation cannot be underestimated. Even so, it was not until relatively large numbers of East Timorese began to arrive in Macau following the Dili massacre that government and civil society became sensitized. First, the Macau government generously supplied accommodation and social support for several hundred East Timorese *repatriados* over many years, pending their repatriation to Portugal, down until the

repatriation of the last 100 remaining East Timorese in IOM-chartered Air Macau aircraft to Baucau in late 1999. Especially given Macau's overburdened social welfare system, this was a particularly generous support on the part of the largely Chinese populated territory. Although it is hard to document, Portuguese discussions with Beijing over the future status of Macau also sensitized the Beijing authorities to the East Timor issue. In any case, China did not veto UN Security Council resolutions on East Timor, just as China became an important contributor to Civpol and, together with post-handover Macau Special Administrative Region, emerged as an important donor to East Timor.

But Macau was also the locus of several East Timor social and political groupings, namely, from 1992, Tatamailau de Macau, an important interface between East Timorese residents in Macau, the Macanese and Chinese community, and East Timorese “political” refugees. At a later stage the five-member Grupo de Macau, became known for its sometimes controversial diplomacy with Jakarta. Macau was also host to a branch of Lusa, and the pluralist Portuguese language and even Chinese language press gave wide coverage to East Timor issues (as indeed, did the Hong Kong media). During the emergency period after September 1999, and recalling historical links which go back in history, Macau civil society responded generously in support of East Timor.

Lusophone Countries

Among the 13 or so countries recognizing the Fretilin UDT were the former Portuguese African colonies of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe. While certain of these countries would be drawn into spiraling civil war fueled by Cold War politics involving U.S. and South African backed renegade elements, Mozambique in particular emerged as

a steadfast supporter of East Timor self-determination. First, Maputo became a place of exile for certain of the Fretilin leadership, and certain among the Fretilin elite, namely Mari Alkatiri, long travelled with a Mozambiquan diplomatic passport. In his acceptance speech for the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, José Ramos-Horta singled out all the Lusophone countries for their support for East Timor. Nevertheless, all the African Lusophone countries along with Brazil consistently voted in favor of East Timor in successive General Assembly votes on the question between 1979-1982. To strike an example of solidarity by the African Lusophone countries, on 18 November 1991, the permanent representative to the UN of the People's Republic of Angola, the Republic of Cape Verde, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the Republic of Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe issued a joint statement condemned the “barbarian massacres” perpetrated against the defenseless people of East Timor, a reference to the Dili massacre. They also reaffirmed their common position that East Timor is a “question of self-determination.” And that the UN Secretary-General renew his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict (Gunn 1997, 114-15).

Nevertheless, over long time, Jakarta played a wily diplomatic game with the Lusophone countries, either as trade and investment partners, or by playing its Non-Aligned Movement card. For example, in 1996, the Portuguese-Indonesia Association under Manuel Macedo reportedly boasted that it had helped to facilitate the establishment of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Guinea-Bissau, then under President General Nino Vieira (Suara Pembaharuan Online, 16 December 1996). Mozambique had earlier agreed to an Indonesian diplomatic presence. In the case of Brazil, it was only at the inaugural ceremony of the Lusophone community in July 1996, that President Fernando Henrique Cardoso decisively shifted his position in support for East Timor's self determination. Angola was a different story. At this forum José Eduardo Santos opposed an

embargo against the Suharto regime, and stood up for Indonesia as a staunch supporter of decolonization within the Non-Aligned Movement (Jornal de Noticias, 18 July 1996). Brazil was one of the countries urging UN Security Council intervention during the emergency period following the 30 September 1999 ballot and went on to become a major contributor to UN Civpol. Mozambique emerged again in April 1997 as host of a conference attended by foreign ministers of Portugal's former African colonies, opened by Mozambique's foreign minister, Leonardo Simão and closed by Gracia Machel, widow of the country's first president. Also in attendance were East Timor's then Fretilin representative in Mozambique, Mari Alkatiri and José Ramos-Horta. The ensuing Maputo Declaration ushering in the newly founded Community of Portuguese Speaking Nations, welcomed the role of the Lusophone countries of Africa in support of East Timor, along with new initiatives taken by South African President Nelson Mandela (*Tapol Bulletin*, no.144, December 1997).

Other European Countries

While individual European countries and their respective defense agencies and arms industries found in Suharto's Indonesia an eager client for arms sales and transfers, as democracies, they were also subject to mounting popular outrage at human rights abuses in Indonesia, with the Dili massacre being a case in point.

Nevertheless, a European position on East Timor self-determination began to evolve especially in European councils. The first occasion on which the EEC adopted a common stand on East Timor was in May 1988 at a meeting in Dusseldorf, a move appreciated at the time by José Ramos-Horta

(*Tapol Bulletin*, no.87, June 1988, 16). Meeting in Strasbourg the European Parliament also adopted a resolution supporting East Timor's right to self-determination.

Referring to declarations on human rights made by the European Council at Luxemburg on 25-26 June, 1992, the EC responded to the Dili massacre with a caution to Indonesia that it would review cooperation, taking into account Indonesian responses to the massacre. On 3 December 1991, the Community and member states also reiterated their support for “an internationally acceptable solution to the conflict” respecting the principles of the UN charter (Gunn 1997, 116).

To strike another example, on 19 June 1996, the European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg issued a resolution on Indonesia, inter alia, condemning military repression in East Timor, deploring acts against freedom of religion, calling for release of political prisoners, and reaffirming support for UN-sponsored negotiations. The Parliament also reiterated its demand that member states of the EU halt all military assistance and arms transfers to Indonesia (Gunn 1997, 252-53). The EU's common position on East Timor became known on 25 June at its session at Luxembourg.

According to the text, the EU would strive “to contribute to the achievement by dialogue of a fair, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution;” called upon Indonesia “to adopt effective measures leading to a significant improvement in then human rights situation” as well as “improving the situation of the people” in East Timor” (Gunn 1997, 254-55).

While such statements were strong, even condemnatory of Indonesia, they still did not translate into firmer interventions in the UN, as might have been achievable by the two European permanent members of the Security Council. Still, with the advent of the Habibie presidency, a shift in public position on the part of individual European nations was discernible. For example, in late June

1998, the ambassadors of the UK, Austria and the Netherlands visited East Timor and concluded that lasting resolution of the issue required a firm commitment to direct consultation of the wishes of the East Timor people (Lloyd 2000, 86). Eventually, in September 1999, when the crucial decisions were being taken on East Timor, the Presidency of the Security Council came under Peter van Walsum, a Dutch diplomat.

In the event, the EC emerged as one of the major donors to East Timor. Commencing during the emergency phase, the EC extended Euros 10 million to UNTAET; allocated Euros 8.5 million for food aid, and committed Euros 56 million to the World Bank Trust Fund for East Timor, among other contributions.

RESPONSES FROM ASIA-PACIFIC

Almost without demurral, Indonesia's partners in the major regional grouping ASEAN adhered to the principle of “non-interference” in Indonesia's domestic affairs. Not only did individual ASEAN nations refuse to protest Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, much less human rights abuses and massacres committed in the territory, but Indonesia actively invigilated this principle by threatening sanctions against waverers. The Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia all allowed themselves to become extensions of the Suharto dictatorship's repressive diplomacy and “willing or weak-kneed accomplices” in the rape and pillage of East Timor (Bello in Inbaraj 1995, vii). The bankruptcy of the ASEAN approach to human rights was exposed by non-action in the crisis of September 1999. The other major regional grouping, the South Pacific Forum, was even easier for Jakarta to handle as it remained dependent upon Australian aid, the shining exception of Vanuatu aside. Major

economic prop of the Jakarta government, Japan, proved to be a last-minute convert to the cause, even trailing the World Bank, offering evidence of that countries “reactive” foreign policy.

The ASEAN “Non-interference” Approach

The most blatant instance of collaboration with the Suharto dictatorship over the invasion of East Timor undoubtedly stems from the actions of the Malaysian government in acting as an arms conduit to Jakarta in order to conceal the origin of the equipment. On 26 September 1975 the CIA's National Intelligence Daily reported 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” [National Times, 30 May-1 June 1982 cited in Inbaraj 1995, 58-59].

It is of more than interest that at the UN Security Council in 1976, the small island Republic of Singapore abstained in the vote on East Timor only to be instructed by the Suharto dictatorship that, among other sanctions, Indonesia would close air space to Singapore aircraft if it did not fall in line with the ASEAN consensus (Inbaraj 1995, 51). Singapore remained a loyal political ally to Suharto and never again officially demurred over the East Timor question whether from a political or human rights perspective. Indeed, the Singapore “Asian values,” debate which stressed collective rights and an individual's responsibilities, over “Western” individualism and universalism of human rights actually served as a cover for the Suharto regime.

Obviously the Santa Cruz massacre tested ASEAN's ironclad principle of non-interference in “domestic” affairs. While the event could hardly be censored from print media, television in some

ASEAN countries is a government monopoly. For example, when in September 1992 a Malaysian television channel allowed footage of the Santa Cruz massacre to be shown on Malaysian television, a Malaysian Minister of Information answered back to Indonesian complaints by visiting Jakarta to apologize for a “breach of etiquette.” Inbaraj (1995, 92) correctly terms this a “cruder aspect” of ASEAN media management. [see International Media]

The rise of civil society movements in the 1990s, especially in Thailand and the Philippines, even prior to the advent of the *reformasi* movements in Indonesia and Malaysia, obviously presented a new challenge to ASEAN-style political management. Not only did the East Timor case test political tolerance and democratic space in a number of ASEAN countries, it actually exposed political corruption (Malaysia) and actively tested the independence of the judiciary (Philippines) [see International Solidarity].

Case Study: APCET Conferences in Manila, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Dili

APCET or the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor was a Philippines-based NGO born out of the democratic space in that country following the end of the Marcos dictatorship. Seeking to regionalize the East Timor question, APCET hosted a series of regional conferences, Manila in 1994, Kuala Lumpur in November 1996, and Bangkok in 1998.

The first, APCET-I held in Manila (1-5 June 1994), attracted international media attention, especially over the decision by the administration of President Fidel Ramos to deport or prohibit entry to a small who's who of international and East Timorese human rights activists. Alerted as to

the planned conference in Manila, as early as October 1993, the Jakarta government commenced to exert pressure on Manila to cancel the event, reminding the Philippine authorities of Jakarta's role at the time in brokering negotiations with the Moro Islamic National Liberation Front. Business and fisheries contracts were also at stake. The Philippine authorities duly drew up a blacklist that included José Ramos-Horta, Madam Daniel Mitterand, Nobel Laureate Malread Maquire, Bishop Soma from Japan, numerous solidarity activists from Australia and elsewhere, East Timorese, and, notionally, Abdulrahman Wahid. Meantime the Quezon City Regional Court took out an order temporarily restraining against holding the conference in the University of the Philippines. On 30 May, acting on a petition filed by APCET, the Philippine Supreme Court overturned this decision. A vastly scaled down conference was held, but not before the Ramos Administration offered assurances to Jakarta that there would be no repeat event (Inbaraj 1995, 107).

Albeit outside the APCET cycle, an NGO meeting was convened in Bangkok in July 1994 with East Timor on the agenda. Nevertheless, the recently sworn in civilian administration of Chuan Leekpai, backed by the Army commander and the Foreign Minister, publicly defended Indonesia's position that East Timor was an internal affair. Thai immigration department fell in line invigilating a blacklist that included Mari Alkatiri. As the Nation newspaper editorialized (Kavi Chongkittavorn), “the “fiasco” surrounding the symposium on East Timor “demonstrated elements of mediocrity and hypocrisy within the Chuan government and its bureaucrats.” But, of course, the Bangkok government was not alone.

APCET-II was held in a hotel venue in Kuala Lumpur in November 1996, where international delegates were joined by progressive elements from Malaysian civil society. Nevertheless the hotel was invaded by thuggish members of the Malaysian ruling party's youth division, UMNO youth.

With the conference in disarray, international delegates were deported, with Malaysian delegates incarcerated, some for days, including an economics professor from University of Malaya. As the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (21 November 1996) reported:

“The damage done to the country's reputation will take some time to live down. What would have been a minor blip on the human rights front if the meeting had been banned was turned into a full-fledged international incident and a public relations fiasco for Kuala Lumpur.”

APCET III was held in Bangkok in March 1998 with 75 delegates in attendance despite obstruction from the Thai Foreign Ministry ahead of a planned visit to Jakarta by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai.

Taken together, the APCET cycle of conferences did much to publicize the fate of East Timor as they did to expose the ASEAN principle of non-interference as absurd in the case of international illegality. In a final event one day prior to the historic ballot of 30 August, APCET organized a seminar in Dili attended by various parliamentarians from ASEAN countries who, notably, broke from the official consensus by applauding the ballot process while entering severe critique of ASEAN-style political management.

The South Pacific Forum

At the time of the invasion a number of individual Pacific island countries were sensitized to the East Timor question. For some, this was a Melanesian issue, for others a small island issue and, for others, a clear cut case of aborted self-determination. As mentioned [see Solidarity Movements],

José Ramos-Horta had been an invitee to a Fiji Council of Trade Union Meetings in late 1975 where the East Timor issue was socialized.

East Timor should have been a major issue at the major regional grouping, the South Pacific Forum. But as this Forum was dominated by Australia and New Zealand and included such countries as Papua New Guinea, the Forum went out of its way to not antagonize Indonesia.

Undoubtedly it was the Pacific island state of Vanuatu, newly independent in 1981 under the Prime Ministership of Father Walter Lini, which went further than any other Asia Pacific state in offering diplomatic and rhetorical support for East Timor self-determination. Prime Minister Lini alone among the South Pacific leaders was unmoved by the interventions made by successive Australian prime ministers to fall in line with the Australian consensus on East Timor or face an aid cutoff (cf. Ramos-Horta 1987, 131-32).

Japan's Reactive Diplomacy

Over long time Japan remained Indonesia's number one provider of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) yet never exercised leverage over Indonesia on the East Timor question in any meaningful sense. Although Japan did not confer de jure recognition of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor and, unlike a number of Western countries never directly supplied military hardware to Indonesia, it also never directly expressed voice for East Timor's self-determination. As Joe Nevins (2003, 633) has stated the matter, individual actions taken by Japan were never decisive in allowing Indonesia's invasion of East Timor to take place in 1975, rather, along with some other countries,

“it was the cumulative effect of Tokyo's policies and practices...” that served to legitimate Jakarta's illegal occupation.

While in March 1996, the Japanese government had given \$100,000 in support of the All-Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue (AIETD), it steadfastly followed Western (U.S.) leads on East Timor, only joining the new consensus at the APEC meeting in Auckland in September 1999, once again highlighting Japan's reactive as opposed to active foreign policy making process. However, as discussed below, civil society in Japan, including the Diet Members Forum on East Timor, church, independent media, and solidarity networks did offer strong moral support for human rights redress and self-determination for East Timor, although within the bounds of Japan's well-known “iron triangle” of government, bureaucracy, and business. [see International Solidarity]

As with Australia, Japan was never a disinterested party with respect to East Timor, facts of life relating to Australia's wartime pr-emptive incursion and Japan's invasion and occupation of the neutral territory. As well remembered in East Timor, Japan's wartime occupation along with Allied bombing led to a population loss of 40-60,000 and with much post-war suffering before recovery. [see Portuguese Colonialism] As Portugal was not a signatory to the 1951 San Francisco Conference governing Japan's postwar reparations obligation, East Timor never received compensation for wartime losses. Although Japan went on to become East Timor's largest donor in the post-1999 period, successive governments in Tokyo held back from offering any apology for wartime actions such as had been done with respect to such former occupied countries as Korea and China. Neither has Japan officially answered the claims of East Timorese comfort women or forced laborers (cf. Gunn 1999).

Japan's record on the Indonesian invasion of East Timor is also reflected in its voting behavior at the UN. In fact Tokyo voted against General Assembly Resolution 3485 and the other seven General Assembly resolutions adopted in each subsequent year until 1982. Although Japan did vote in favor of Security Council Resolution 384 adopted unanimously on 22 December 1975, there was a sense that Japan understood that Jakarta's invasion could not be reversed.⁴ And so, on 22 April 1976, Tokyo abstained in the Security Council vote on 389. According to political scientist Paulo Gorjão (2002), as one of Jakarta's key political allies, Japan in 1976 “immediately attempted to diminish the international condemnation directed at Jakarta.” But, Gorjão writes, Japan went beyond passive acquiescence of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor by emerging as one of Jakarta's most faithful political allies. East Timor simply disappeared from Japan's diplomatic priorities. With the exception of small independent media (eg. *Ampo* magazine), the press followed suit. [See International Media]

The 1991 Dili massacre did not affect Japan's non-interference principle concerning Jakarta. In fact, when the Netherlands withdrew its support for the Inter-governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) in protest at Jakarta's actions, Japan stepped in with the revamped CGGI, the new institutional arrangement governing the coordination of multilateral aid to Indonesia. Where other countries reviewed their defense cooperation programs with Indonesia in direct response to the massacre, Japan's Defense Agency was unmoved and continued its, albeit small, training program (cf. Nevins 2002, 633).

In 1991, under the Prime Ministership of Toshiki Kaifu, as intimated, Japan elaborated a so-called ODA Charter, inter alia, pledging to withhold ODA to countries producing weapons of mass destruction, militarizing, or not moving towards democratization. In fact this linkage has been

upheld with respect to China and India's nuclear testing, to some distant African countries abusing human rights, and – under external pressure or *gaiatsu* – also applied to Myanmar. While the ODA Charter is but a memory in Japan today, Suharto's Indonesia never merited linkage even when the Charter applied.

In other words, Japan was steadfast with its economic aid to Indonesia through the economic crisis, through the East Timor crisis of 1999, seemingly oblivious to waste and corruption, and ironically, only in 2001 exercised economic leverage over Indonesia (the Wahid administration) in line with the World Bank and IMF on the grounds of ineptness. With a strong participatory civil and political culture, tested through the 1960s and 1970s by the anti-U.S. bases movement and opposition to the Vietnam War, it would not be surprising if support for East Timor self-determination emerged from the political left. Notably, the major opposition party in Japan during these decades, the Japan Socialist Party (currently Democratic Party), long headed by Mrs Takako Doi, had earlier spearheaded opposition to Japanese ODA support to the Marcos dictatorship.

In late 1986, an active Parliamentarians for East Timor group emerged in the Japanese Diet sensitized by global concerns over human rights abuses. But, as with other PET groups around the world, the Diet Members Forum was galvanized into action by the Dili massacre. Leading actor within the group was Eda Satsuki, a member of Shakai Minsu Rengo (Shaminren) or Coalition of Social Democrats. [see International Solidarity]

In December 1991, in the wake of the Dili massacre, the Forum persuaded 262 Diet members to sign a petition calling for a review of Japanese aid to Indonesia. Even though Japan had recently introduced its ODA Charter, this initiative went nowhere. Triumphant in obtaining new aid

pledges, visiting foreign minister Ali Alatas felt sufficiently confident in Jakarta's ability to deflect criticism in Tokyo that he extended an invitation to head of the Diet Members Forum, Satsuki Eda, to lead a delegation to East Timor. In the event this offer was delayed indefinitely owing to the “tense” situation in Dili (cf. Gunn with Lee 1994, 191).

Among other activities, in September 1992, 143 Diet members together with counterparts in the U.S. Congress petitioned the UN Secretary-General to be more active on the East Timor issue. In August 1994, five members of the Forum (including Tomoko Okazaki, Yasuko Takemura, Seichi Kaneta, and Banri Kaeda, plus one Liberal Democratic Party member) visited Indonesia and East Timor to study the situation at first hand. On this visit they met with Ali Alatas in Jakarta, Major General Adnan Ruchiatna of the Udayana Command in Bali and, in Dili, meeting Bishop Belo, Governor Abilio Soares, provincial legislators, Father Domingo Soares, among others. They also visited the Santa Cruz cemetery, and the Wirahusada military hospital in Dili. In August 1999, Eda headed up a Diet member observer mission to East Timor.

In 1996, the now-67 Diet Forum group, petitioned Australian Prime Minister John Howard on the occasion of his visit to Tokyo in September that year, urging him to cooperate with Japan in finding a solution to the problem, a proposal that sounds as reasonable today as it did at the time.

As widely reported in the Japanese (and Indonesian) media, Nobel Laureate José Ramos-Horta was virtually snubbed by Japanese government officials during his visit to Japan in January 1996. While Nobel laureates are customarily presented to government leaders, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda, were obviously disingenuous in claiming to be too busy to meet the laureate.

Ryutaro Hashimoto was Primer Minister during the outbreak of the Asian economic crisis, eventually leading to the downfall of Suharto. But visiting Jakarta during the economic crisis on 9 January 1997, Hashimoto told the Indonesian President that: “In Japan, we say that a friend in need, is a friend indeed. This is truly the kind of relationship that we have with Indonesia and that I hope will keep growing ” (Gunn 2000, xvi). Japan never disappointed. East Timor was simply not on the agenda of serious discussion. Although private sector concerns in Japan were seething at corporate corruption in Indonesia, especially when they became the victims as with the Japanese automobile industry, no conditionality was imposed upon Japanese ODA.

To be fair, Foreign Minister Ikeda had raised the issue of human rights abuses in East Timor at a meeting with his Indonesian counterpart at an ASEAN expanded counterpart meeting in Jakarta. But it should be stated that Japan never stood up for East Timor at the annual meetings of the UNHRC.

Japan at the Auckland APEC Summit (September 1999)

At the Auckland APEC summit in September 1999, Japan was obviously placed in a quandary. A day by day, even hour by hour assessment would be in order, if possible, to discern the slide in Japan's official position from 24-years sycophancy to Jakarta to conversion to humanitarian interventionism, as the revelation of crimes against humanity of an appalling nature could no longer be covered up. As late as 12 September, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was reported as saying that in no way would he interrupt aid to Jakarta as that would have untoward effect towards “Indonesian stability, its people and the Asian economy” (cf. Dow Jones, 12 September 2001 “Japan not studying change in aid toward Indonesia”). But, by this stage, [even] the U.S. and the World Bank

thought otherwise. By 2001, Japan was committed to funding Indonesia to the tune of \$2 billion annually, 60 percent of Indonesia's total loans. While Obuchi also reportedly said that Indonesia should not feel ashamed to heed calls for international intervention, the Japanese prime minister also stated that the Tokyo government would only go as far to provide “logistic support to a United Nations led force for East Timor.” On 13 September, reacting to the new international consensus, Obuchi announced that his government would support the UN with financial contributions towards emergency humanitarian assistance, as well as assistance for rehabilitation and development in East Timor.

Japan's official position on political and economic support for Indonesia and its position on East Timor can be tracked in the “Diplomatic bluebook,” a summary analysis of the Tokyo government's official position as expressed by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through 1999, if not beyond, as Nevins (2002, 624) exposes, the Foreign Ministry was still beholden to the “rogue element” school of militia actions, largely in line with elite sentiment in Jakarta.

Undoubtedly with memories of Cambodia in mind, where Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) personnel took casualties, Japan contributed only three Civpol to the UNAMET mission, albeit confined to headquarters. Japan did not send a Civpol contribution to INTERFET or UNTAET. Japan's Peacekeeping Law, drafted in response to the Cambodia emergency, disallowed Japan from dispatching SDF troops to combat zones. Guided by this restriction, Japan's response to the humanitarian emergency following the September 1999 violence was to dispatch SDF aircraft to Surabaya to service the humanitarian need of displaced East Timorese in west Timor. Debate in the Japanese Diet over modifying the Peacekeeping law dragged on until “September 11” when, overriding strong opposition from defenders of Japan's war-renouncing constitution backed by the

local East Timor solidarity movement, the government announced the dispatch of a 550-strong Japanese Engineering Group (JEG) which began to deploy in January 2002. While claiming legitimacy from invitations extended by East Timorese leaders then serving in the ETTA-UNTAET government, in fact the pressure to dispatch the SDF was driven by strong nationalist factions in Japan's ruling party, eager to restore Japan's "normal" country status.

Notes

1. Additionally, in September 2000, the Canberra government sanctioned the early release by the Australian National Archives of primary documents covering Indonesia's annexation of Portuguese Timor between 1974 and 1976. Even so, the documents were vetted for "sensitive" materials otherwise not to be released until they reach the 30-year open access period.
2. See Australian National Archives Series A1209/73 "Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia, August-September 1974." According to the official transcript of Whitlam's meeting with Suharto in Yogyakarta on 6 September 1974, "the Prime Minister said that he felt two things were basic to his own thinking on Portuguese Timor. First, he believed that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia. Second, this should happen in accordance with the properly expressed wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor."
3. A recent examination of Portugal's diplomatic role on East Timor is Estêvão Cabral, "Portugal and East Timor: From a Politics of Ambivalence to a Late Awakening," *Portuguese Studies Review* (Vol.11, no.1, Fall-Winter, 2003, pp.29-47).
4. As Saito Shizuo (1977: 10-16), Japan's Ambassador to the UN during the initial UN vote on the invasion has written, he "vigorously lobbied in favor of Indonesia's invasion as a legitimate action."

Saito was also a military administrator in Indonesia and a postwar Ambassador to Jakarta (1964-66).