

# CAN EAST TIMOR SURVIVE INDEPENDENCE?

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**North Australia Research Unit**  
DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 17/2000  
RSPAS.ANU.EDU.AU/NARU

First published in Australia in 2000 by the North Australia Research Unit, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University. The views expressed in this

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National Library of Australia  
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Oenarto, Joseph.  
Can East Timor Survive Independence?

ISBN 0 7315 3331 3

ISSN 1327-4791

1. Timor Timur (Indonesia). National Consultative Committee. 2. United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. 3. Timorese National Resistance Council. 4. Nationalism – Indonesia – Timor Timur.  
5. Timor Timur (Indonesia) – Politics and government. 6. Timor Timur (Indonesia) – Economic conditions. 7. Timor Timur (Indonesia) – Social conditions. I. Australian National University. North Australia Research Unit.  
II. Title. (Series : Discussion paper (Australian National University. North Australia Research Unit); no. 17/2000).

959.8604

Published by:

NORTH AUSTRALIA RESEARCH UNIT  
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## Acronyms

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ASDT   | Association of Timorese Social Democrats                  |
| ASEAN  | Association of South East Asian Nations                   |
| BNU    | <i>Banco Nacional Ultramarino</i>                         |
| CNRT   | Timorese National Resistance Council                      |
| IMF    | International Monetary Fund                               |
| JAMET  | The Joint Assessment Mission                              |
| NCC    | National Consultative Committee                           |
| PPI    | Pro-Integration Forces                                    |
| SAPT   | <i>Sociedade Agricola Patria e Trabalho</i>               |
| SGI    | <i>Satuan Tugas Intelijen</i> (Special Intelligence Unit) |
| TNI    | Indonesian National Army                                  |
| UDT    | Timorese Democratic Union                                 |
| UN     | United Nations  |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                      |
| UNTAET | United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor  |

# CAN EAST TIMOR SURVIVE INDEPENDENCE?

Joseph Oenarto\*

## Introduction

After 274 years of Portuguese colonisation, with short interregnums by the Japanese, and 24 years of Indonesia occupancy, the East Timorese have exercised their right for self-determination through popular consultation on 30 August 1999. With a voter turnout of 98 per cent, around 78.5 per cent of people registered to vote rejected the integration into The Republic of Indonesia.

The East Timorese must now gather all of their resources together and prepare to build a Nation that can inspire the unanimous support of the majority of the people. In so doing they will need to overcome serious social, economic, and political disparities.

As a consequence of the ballot the United Nations (UN) through Security Council Resolution 1272, has established a Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). UNTAET has the power 'to exercise all legislative and executive authority including the administration of justice'. To avoid the possibility of imposing itself on the East Timorese UNTAET has formed a fifteen-member National Consultative Committee (NCC), comprised of four UNTAET members, ten members from the Timorese National Resistance Council (CNRT), Church representatives, and one pro-Jakarta representative.

UNTAET now acts as *de facto* transitional government until the final legitimate government is formed through a national election. The election is planned for early 2001. Over this same period, the East Timorese will need to form the foundation of a democratic and self-sufficient country, free from any kind of imperialistic dependency. To do this, the East Timorese must generate their sense of nationalism. They will need to build economic political infrastructure to reduce social discrepancies, regional disparities and formulate a policy of natural resource utility and development.

This account of the transition period is formed on three issues: first, existing social circumstances in East Timor; second, the emerging national identity; and, third the quality and direction of the interaction between the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the Timorese National Resistance Council (CNRT).

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UNTAET needs to understand the history of the Nation-building process to avoid mistakes that could lead to serious and irreversible social and political failures in the future.

A discussion of issues includes general basic social problems, such as education, skills, productivity, the ownership of the 'means of production', income opportunities and employment, etc.

National identity is also explained, particularly the national language, the vernacular culture, and national currency – on features of Nation building with implications for political and economic structures, as well as investment of foreign capital.

Although the interaction between UNTAET and CNRT has been clearly formulated by the United Nations through the *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in East Timor* (04/10/99)<sup>1</sup>, there are several technical questions discussed in this paper. First, the role of the CNRT without losing control to UNTAET; second, in which way can the CNRT and UNTAET resolve the militia problem to sustain national reconciliation and peace; third, how will the CNRT represent the aspirations of the majority of the East Timorese people; and, fourth, does UNTAET have the power to protect East Timor from imperialism.

## RECENT EVENTS

### Total Destruction

The situation directly following the ballot was described clearly by Xanana Gusmao, in his 'victory' speech from his containment in Jakarta.

I appeal to all the people to hide yourselves, to not go out because the evil people who kill us, within these years still want to continue to do so, seeking to wipe out the Maubere people.

I know, I have heard that Indonesian military in all places are shooting indiscriminately. I appeal that all people remain calm or leave their homes.

Let them burn our homes, it doesn't matter. Let them rob the things that individually we have sweated for, it doesn't matter. I appeal to all the guerrillas, to commander Ruak, to all regional commanders, all my brothers and sisters to maintain your positions too not to react to all of these things.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in East Timor*, 4/10/99

We starve, we thirst, for 23 years and today I appeal, again to my dear brothers and sisters, to continue to endure. Endure the hunger. In order to save the people. Endure the thirst in order to save our country.<sup>2</sup>

Before Xanana had finished speaking, the pro-Jakarta militias and the Indonesian Army had commanded looting and burning of houses, shops, warehouses and public service facilities, they indiscriminately tortured and murdered people who were suspected to be pro-independence. The rampage of violence displaced almost 80 per cent of the population. Over 250,000 people were forced to flee as refugees to West Timor and other Indonesian provinces. Over 300,000 people also fled to the mountains of East Timor.<sup>3</sup> The rampage, killing, destruction of property, and displacement of the people, totally destroyed the entire social system.

To restore public services, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) proposed an overall education program consisting of: vocational education and training, immediate on-the-job training, rehabilitation of the polytechnic, returning secondary and tertiary education students, teacher training, re-establishment of the University of East Timor and an education policy.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, the UNDP did not explain who should have legitimacy to decide the teaching language for these ambitious two-year development programs. Since most of the teachers fled the country, this project is to be carried out by foreign teachers and instructors – none of whom speak Tetum, but English or Portuguese. The students in the immediate on-the-job training program speak neither Portuguese nor English and will no doubt find it difficult to follow the courses. Likewise, the foreign teachers and trainers will not be able to learn Tetum in such a short time.

Problems will also effect the returning school and university students, many of whom have studied *Bahasa Indonesia* for years. If the Timorese politicians opt to use Tetum as the national language, then UNDP should prepare a respective number of linguists to develop school books and higher education lecturing materials, a program that could take at least three to five years.

The massive movement of the population caused a huge deficit of labour in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Most skilled positions included those in management, and technical and merchant sectors were occupied by Indonesians all of whom left the country. Many of the unskilled labourers who fled their villages are still displaced and many have moved to urban areas looking for surviving family members.

The longer this situation remains unresolved, the more people will remain unemployed, the less stock of food will be produced, and the more dependent on foreign aid the Timorese people will become.

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<sup>2</sup> BBC News, 4/8/1999

<sup>3</sup> ETISC, 13/9/1999

<sup>4</sup> UNDP Report, 1/8/1999

According to the The Joint Assessment Mission (JAMET) the following reconstruction is needed:

- restoration of local seed and development of seed stations;
- livestock restoration program;
- small-holder coffee development initiative;
- rehabilitation of targeted irrigation systems;
- small scale fisheries development;
- agro-forestry and tree crops initiative;
- land capacity and agricultural systems mapping;
- restoration of meteorological stations;
- agricultural survey and database development;
- small-holder mechanisation program.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of the technical aspects there is little that can be said against these recommendation. But, from a social perspective, some fundamental problems should be resolved prior to the implementation of these programs. First, there should be a proportional distribution of labour forces; second, people's participation in each production unit should be greatly increased; and, thirdly, methods involving people in the planning, implementation and maintenance phases must become a priority.

The underestimation of these fundamental preconditions could lead to a classical division of labour. The losers in this competitive game will most likely be the people who have never been in a classroom. They spent most of their time in the past either in the jungle or hiding in the crowded urban centres fighting for the independence of East Timor.

In the aftermath of the rampage of looting and destruction, the economy in East Timor has totally broken down: current stocks of goods, stores, storage, shipping, overland transportation, vendors, trading, banking and payment systems are totally inadequate.

Moreover, consumer price index for poor households in the Dili market rose by over 200 per cent between August and October, 1999. The gross domestic product for the year 1999 is estimated to drop to a range of between 40–50 per cent.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, the presence of the UN-related agencies produces massive demands impacting on urban services such as hotels and restaurants, real estate, transportation and communication. This may be good for the macro economy, but not necessarily for the majority of the people who have no access to these kinds of businesses.

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<sup>5</sup> JAMET, 15/11/1999

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

JAMET recommended restarting the flow of goods and services, including an agreement on border trade with West Timor. This process has just commenced through an agreement between East and West Timor. Also recommended, is the immediate establishment of a payment system by allowing the rapid entry of reputable foreign banks. This involved immediate negotiations with Indonesia. Moves to re-establish Indonesian Banks intended to permit the settlement of credits and depositor claims, and the settlement of civil servant pensions and social security claims. The establishment of currency arrangements and exchange houses should, in principle, ease access to currency conversion facilities for the personnel of the international agencies who might bring different convertible currencies into East Timor.

JAMET also recommended the collection of baseline economic and social data through population census, price surveys, household income and expenditure surveys, in order to support effective policy-making; and the provision of credit for small and medium enterprises.

The question is: how long can the East Timorese wait until these surveys are complete and adequate measures formulated and implemented so as to solve unemployment, and weak purchase powers, and rising inflation?

## Land Ownership

Land acquisitions made during the Indonesian occupancy should be considered as illegal. Though some acquisitions were made strictly according to Indonesian law, the process and methods applied were often biased and oppressive.

In the Portuguese colonisation era, vast tracts of land were controlled by four major groups. The first group was the *mestiço*, the descendants of political activists who were deported by Portugal to its eastern-most colony. Among this group is the Carrascalao family who occupy 500 hectares of coffee plantation in the border region between Liquica and Ermera. The *deportados*, as they were called, were given large tracts of land to dilute their resistance against Portugal.

The second group of large land owners represented a number of kings or *liurai*, who had served the Portuguese well. One example of this group is the King of Atsabe, Chairman of the Pro-Integration Party, Apodeti.

Beside those private owners, there were a number of State companies, such as SAPT (*Sociedade Agricola Patria e Trabalho*), that controlled thousands of hectares of coffee and coconut plantation in Liquica, Ermera, Baucau and Lautem.

The Catholic Church, probably the biggest land owning institution in East Timor, utilised land for their parish churches, monasteries, boarding schools, rice fields and plantations to feed the community in the parishes.

When the Fretilin began to campaign its party platform, it was based on a demand for total land reform. That demand attracted massive support from the majority of the people and

brought the party a victory in the elections of village heads in 1974. The land reform issue required the redistribution of the large land holdings that were in private hands, as well as of Portuguese State companies, and included surplus lands owned by the Catholic Church.

It is therefore understandable that, at the beginning of the decolonisation period, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in East Timor conveyed their formal support for Apodeti, which along with the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), had the same fear of the land reform idea.<sup>7</sup>

During the Indonesian occupation, this kind of land ownership pattern basically did not deter. The Catholic Church, the pro-Jakarta *liurai* and the *deportardos* kept their land titles. The plantations formerly owned by the Portuguese State companies were taken over by Indonesian companies, such as PT Salazar Coffee Plantations.

The Indonesian Air Force bombarded the land with OV-10 Broncos which actively unloaded napalm bombs, terrifying the rural population and forcing them to leave their homes and agriculture land. They were then forced to stay in the so-called 'guided villages' as their new home. Here they had to cut down a part of the steep terrain to cultivate crops for survival.

Illegal acquisitions of large tracts of land during the Indonesian occupation caused many people to become landless peasants. The acquisition included the monopolised marble venture by PT Marmer Timor Timur; the sugar plantation and sugar mill in Lautem; and, the sandalwood-oil exploitation by PT Scent Indonesia.

Competition in the urban area led to most of the land in the commercial and business district being transferred to the more commercially advanced Chinese, Buginese, Javanese and Balinese immigrants. Thus, the Timorese were forced to move to the outskirts of the cities.

## NATIONAL IDENTITY

### Historical, Cultural and Regional Background

From 1701 until 1975, well before Fretilin proclaimed the birth of the Democratic Republic of East Timor, the territory was a Portuguese Colony.

In the Portuguese colonial period, East Timor had almost no relations with Asian or even South-East Asian countries, except with Macau, and that was only because of their common relations with Portugal. Only the Chinese community, known as the overseas Chinese from Dili, through their trading as well as their social cultural activities, had maintained quite intensive relations with Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and Singapore.

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<sup>7</sup> George J. Aditjondro, *Dilli Massacre Lies Exposed*, 1994, p 15-23.

For the Indonesians, this half island was always known as *Timor Portugis*. East Timor was identified as one of the colonialisied provinces of the Portuguese Empire.

Especially for the Belu people in West Timor, East Timor was a part of the territory which was controlled by the Waihalu empire. This empire controlled a territory from Sabu Island in the west to Taninbar in the east. It was divided by three princes of this empire in the 17th century, before the Portuguese invaded the territory by force. The eldest prince kept control of the center of the empire in Kamanasa, a little village in Belu at the border to Suai; the second prince was assigned to form the Lorosa'e Kingdom in the eastern part of Timor; and, the youngest prince was assigned to conquer and control the territory in the western part of Timor from the top of Mutis Mountain. Until now, the cultural band across the territory was still strong among the *liurais* and the *rajas*.

Cultural relations did not break down, even during the colonial period. The Portuguese neither prohibited the cultural visits across the border from Belu to Bobonaro, nor from Mutis Mountain to Ambeno district, and *vice versa*.

In 1975 a number of *liurais* and some Association of Timorese Social Democrats (ASDT)/Fretilin leaders reached an important understanding with Brigadier General El Tari, the Governor of East Nusatenggara Province whose capital is in Kupang –West Timor.

Ramos Horta: I met with Brigadier General El Tari whom I had known before and I knew he liked me a lot and I also liked him, and he then organised for my trip to Jakarta. . .<sup>8</sup>

El Tari argued that, 'with the brotherhood concept we can reunite East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia without sacrificing a single person'. But General Ali Murtopo had a different agenda which was designed to use military forces to invade and occupy the territory.

The invasion was officially sanctioned by the Indonesian government based on the Balibo Petition, which was according to Guilherme Gonzalves (Apodeti) and Jose Martins (Kota) made and signed in Bali, not in Balibo.

Guilherme Goncalves: we made the petition in Bali! not in Balibo! This is a trick of Mister Taolin. Mr Taolin was a Bakin officer.<sup>9</sup>

The National Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR-RI) ratified this petition on 17 July 1976 with the *Act No: 7/1976*.

During the quasi-integration period from July 1976 until the majority of the East Timorese people rejected the special autonomy through a popular consultation on 30 August 1999,

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<sup>8</sup> Santoso Aboeprijadi, *Jejak-Jejak Darah*, 1996, p 4

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p 13.

East Timor was claimed as the 27th Province of the Republic of Indonesia. East Timor had lost its identity as an independent Nation.

Now, after the Indonesian occupation has come to an end, East Timorese needs to find their own identity.

## The Name for the Nation and State

The way East Timor leaders have named this territory has caused confusion, particularly for outsiders. Sometimes, the same political leader will call the territory by a different name in the same occasion, such as: Timor Lorosa'e, Timor Leste, Maubere.

The origin of Timor Lorosa'e and the link to the kingdom in West Timor have been explained above. This name was widely promoted by the Indonesians during their occupation in the territory to remind the East Timorese that they have genealogical relations with their West Timorese brothers and sisters.

Timor Leste or East Timor in Portuguese occurred in the acronym of Fretilin (*Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente*). Since Fretilin became less popular in contrast to the CNRT, the term *Timor-Leste* has gradually disappeared. It is very likely that in the future this name will become less relevant.

Following the CNRT's active campaign, the word Maubere has become more popular than when it was first introduced by the Fretilin leaders, who developed the term Maubereism to describe the poor and powerless people, using a word from the original Timorese vocabulary.<sup>10</sup>

It is up to the majority of the East Timorese to choose one of those names as the name of the Nation and State. The essential thing is that the name must be accepted by the majority of the people as a symbol of national unity.

## Regional and Global Constellations

East Timor needs to find its national identity: the people need to decide whether East Timor belongs to the Asian (South-East Asian) community, and to the Australian hegemony, as a solitary island State like many other small countries in Pacific, or as an associate of Portuguese and, consequently, of the European Community.

Geographically, East Timor and West Timor belong to the continent of Asia, particularly South-East Asia. Economically, East Timor is considered as one of the least developed and most impoverished countries, now characteristic of only some parts of South-East Asia.

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<sup>10</sup> George J. Aditjondro, *East Timor: An Indonesian Intellectual Speaks Out*, 1994, p 4.

Historically, East Timor has had almost no relationship with Asian countries, except the Chinese community living in East Timor – 6,120 persons according to the census of 1970 and possibly 10,000 by the year 2000. The Chinese community is made up mainly of successful merchants, traders, and some plantation holders. The Timorese Chinese maintain their relationships and develop networks among the overseas Chinese, not only in Asia but around the World. Using these networks, East Timor can easily integrate itself within the Asian community. This would help East Timor to become a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which will generate more solidarity with the entire ASEAN countries. A move in that direction requires a better understanding and relations between East Timor as an independent State with its closest neighbours: Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei Darusalam, the Philippines and other ASEAN members. By identifying itself as part of ASEAN, East Timor could develop the economic and politic relationship within the South-East Asia community.

Australia, together with the USA, Canada, Japan, Great Britain, Portugal and the United Nations, has played a very important role in recent development in East Timor. The government of Australia and the Australian community will play an even greater role in developing the country in every aspect. That will bring broad assimilation effects in term of language, science, technology, economy and cultural transformation. The mobility of the people across the border, to and from Australia, will bring East Timor culturally closer to Australia than to their brotherhood in West Timor, whose border will probably be closed for at least five to ten years. Without any cultural resistance, the East Timorese, especially the young generation, will absorb western culture and identify themselves with it. This could hinder the East Timorese in building their identity as part of Asia and particularly as part of the domain of the Waihali (Timor) ancestors.

On the other hand, East Timorese could develop their self-confidence to such an extent that they do not need to identify themselves either as part of Asia or Australia, but as a solitary Nation. East Timor can stand independently as small as it is equal to its neighbours, Papua New Guinea, Togo, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and other island States in the Pacific Ocean. This will bring the most disadvantages for the new born East Timor which really needs cooperation with larger communities of the World.

With the strong alignment to Portugal, East Timor could also receive strong political, as well as economical, support from the European Community. As a former Portuguese colony, East Timor can even tie up with countries like Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, etc. Relationships with those countries can be very useful, especially to create cooperation on economic, science, technology and political matters.

Because of these many relationships, East Timor can play a dynamic role not only in the Asia Pacific region but, more importantly, can create a relationship with former Portuguese colonies, South-East Asia and countries of Oceania.

## Cultural Diversity

The half-island of East Timor covers only 18,898 square kilometres but contains a rich and diverse array of cultures. These are indicated by the number of vernacular architectures and languages.

According to Cinatti, de Almeida and Mendes there are seven vernacular architectural styles in East Timor. These are the Bobonaro style, the Maubisse style, the Baucau style, the Lautem style, the Viqueque style, the Suai style, and the Oecusse style.

The Lospalos style displays exquisite carvings – on a par with the *tongkonan* of South Sulawesi. In the style of building structure and roofing shape this architectural style has many similarities with of the Toraja and Batak. As observed by Aditjondro, the Baucau and Lautem styles have striking similarities to the *silimo* found in the Baliem Valley.

In their 1987 study, Cinatti and his co-authors give some explanation for why a small region such as East Timor could have produced such stunning architectural variety.<sup>11</sup>

The popular legends of East Timor have described some of the migration routes of the ancestors of the East Timorese, which trace their origin to Malacca, Makassar in South Sulawesi and the Island of Ceram in the Moluccas. One of the most popular myths surrounding the origin of the Island gives credit to a crocodile for its creation. The crocodile was a wanderer from Makassar – the same myth is shared by the Atoni of West Timor.<sup>12</sup>

The distribution of the diverse vernacular languages in East Timor is also complicated. People in the eastern-most regency of Lospalos speak *Fatuluku*; in Baucau they speak *Makassae*; in Viqueque, Manatuto, Dili, Same, Bobonaro, Suai, and Balibo the language is *Tetum*; in Aileu, Ainaro, Same, Ermera they speak *Mambae*; in Manatuto both *Galolen* and *Idate* are spoken; in Ainaro and Bobonaro they speak *Bunak*; in Ermera and Bobonaro, *Kemak*; in Liquica, *Tokodede*; and, in Oecusse, *Dawan* is spoken.

This rich diversity of culture should be seen as having great potential for the development and rebuilding of the Nation, providing the country maintains a strong unification base – the type shown by the resistance movement in its fight against Indonesian occupation.

Despite the complexity of diverse cultures in East Timor, Aditjondro identified two major ‘east-west’ groups: the Easterners refer to these groups as ‘Firaco’ and the Westerners are known as ‘Caladi’.

The Caladis have been described as ‘civilised’ and hence diplomatic compared to the Firacos who some considered to be wild fighters, preferring to find solutions through fighting than negotiating.

Both are stereotypes but both are useful to characterise the political leaders of the decolonisation and the independence movement.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p 19.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 29.

Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the first President of Fretilin, was a Caladi, too eager to surrender and negotiate with the Indonesian Armed Forces. A Firaco, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmau had shown a much stronger fighting spirit. Even in the disastrous years of 1978–1980 he was one of the few Fretilin members who had the determination to continue carrying out the armed struggle.

Among the pro-Jakarta leaders, such as Jose Abilio Osorio Soares, the former Governor of East Timor, can be categorised as a Firaco. He also showed a tough fighting spirit by insisting that all district heads (*bupati*) in East Timor should be native, civilian East Timorese, despite strong pressure from the Army Regional Commander, Major General Theo Syafei.

Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo represents another Firaco who has continuously maintained a relatively independent stance for his diocese, in the face of Indonesian government and church authorities who have persistently urged him to publicly declare his support for the integration into Indonesia.<sup>13</sup>

## National Language

Tetum is spoken in the interior of the Territory. Tetum was adopted by Fretilin, not only in its party platform but also in its Paulo Freire-style literacy program among the native clans. This move was supported by the Catholic Church which also adopted Tetum as its major liturgical language in the early 1980s. Eventually, in 1990, in an effort to win the hearts of the East Timorese the Indonesian authorities adopted a policy of teaching Tetum as the second language in all primary schools.<sup>14</sup>

Now, despite the complex distribution of diverse native languages, 60 per cent of the East Timorese speak Tetum as their first language and another 20 per cent speak Tetum as a second language.<sup>15</sup>

As a consequence of Fretilin's literacy policy, and the missionary use of the vernacular Tetum, covering around 80 per cent of the population, Tetum has the potential to become the national language – a language of unity, and the language of the Maubere people.

But, for bureaucratic and educational purposes, that language needs to be upgraded, and that needs time and effort.

The question is whether it is worthwhile to develop a new language which can meet the requirements of science, art, and commerce when it might be more efficient and effective to use one of the European languages already developed both for science and art.

The Indonesian authorities tried to extinguish the Portuguese language, but it became more popular among the independence activists. Portuguese was formerly considered as the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p 28.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 40.

<sup>15</sup> David Odling-Smee, 1999, *Language Policy in East Timor – A Proposal*, p 2.

language of oppression but became the language of resistance. According to David Odling-Smee's study in 1999, 10 per cent of the Timorese can speak Portuguese and many more can understand it.

But, there is a negative side to Portuguese because of its historical and geographical background.

Historically, Portuguese was used by the colonial authority. Using this language as the official language will arouse anti-colonialist emotions among the Maubere people. The ten per cent Portuguese-speaking population are considered to be among the elite of the country, even within the resistance leadership. In the transition period, the use of Portuguese as the official language will provide immense advantages for the elite and, by the same token, disadvantage the Maubere people. Finally, because of its geographical position, the use of Portuguese as the teaching language in East Timor will be costly compared to English. English has a much greater role in areas such as economics, politics and technology throughout the region and the world.

On the positive side, such as teaching Portuguese as a second language, the literature related to East Timor's history, and science, as well as the maintenance of a relationship with Portuguese-speaking countries will need to come into effect.

During 24 years of Indonesian occupancy Bahasa Indonesia was taught as the primary language at every level of the education system. Indonesian also had been used as the official language from the village level up to the highest authority. The result was that 90 per cent of the population under 30 years old, and 50 per cent of population over 30 years old understand Indonesian.<sup>16</sup>

Indonesian risks possible sentimental rejection first, at least in the immediate future, Bahasa Indonesian is a bridging language both for teaching and for administration. In the long term Indonesian, as a second language, could be useful for maintaining a bond with East Timor's Asian neighbours: Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

During the successive colonisation by both the Portuguese and the Indonesians, English was only poorly taught in the high schools. When the Indonesian authorities began promoting higher education in the 1990s, some Timorese were able to study English at University but, even there, the quality was still considered poor. Only two per cent of the East Timorese population can speak English.

## National Currency

Recent discussions concerning the building of an East Timor independent State has focussed on the choice of a national currency. Some currencies have been offered as alternatives, including the Euro-Dollar, the US-Dollar and the Escudo. The selection of any national currency is not only a matter of getting the best monetary solution for the country

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p 2.

but how it interacts with State security, and against the hidden economic interests of foreign countries.

As the former colonial power in East Timor, Portugal has made the first aggressive move in a bid to maximise economic, cultural, and technological leverage over East Timor's economy. Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) is the first overseas bank which the UN allowed to establish business in East Timor. The BNU continues to operate its services despite causing confusion. The bank buys Australian and US dollars, but sells only Escudos. Vendors in Dili's Mercado Municipal (central market) will only accept payment in Indonesian Rupiah while the UN shop sells goods in Australian dollars, and the Turismo Hotel charges in US dollars. The Portuguese Escudo is virtually useless in this one-bank territory because it cannot be converted, nor is it accepted, for the purchase of good or services.

Despite problems, the presence of BNU and the Escudo seem to be essential for the Portuguese who apparently speculated strongly on acceptance by East Timorese of the Escudo as the national currency.

Also, Portugal plans to spend Euro\$75 million annually on cooperation aid for East Timor until 2003. It has already spent Euro\$60 million since May 1999.

The question is, will the Escudo bind the East Timorese people to Portugal, a colonial power a quarter century ago. East Timorese cannot forget the horror of their experiences in the year 1975. That was when the East Timor Escudo was not recognised in any part of the world, even in Portugal itself; they could not convert their Timorese Escudo into any other currency.

The most interesting currency to be discussed specifically is the Euro-Dollar as the national currency for East Timor. This could be a strong drawcard in the new millennium. The expansion of European currency to the Pacific would be as significant as the discovery of America by Columbus. In fact the presence of the Euro-Dollar could prevent the dominance of the American Dollar, Yen or Australian Dollar.

In reality though, to avoid the problems of a foreign currency, the creation of a genuine national currency would seem the only solution. This would strengthen the national identity of East Timor leaving the Central Bank of East Timor to take monetary measures independently.

## THE UNTAET FRAMEWORK

On 25 October 1999, the United Nations, through its Security Council Resolution No. 1272, authorised UNTAET to take all necessary measures for the administration of East Timor. UNTAET will be empowered to exercise all legislative and executive authority including the administration of justice.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> UN Resolution, No. 1272 (1999), Paragraph 1.

The mandate contains the following;

- the provision of security and the maintenance of law and order through the territory of East Timor;
- the establishment of an effective administration;
- assistance in the development of civil and social services;
- assurance of the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance;
- support for capacity-building for self-government; and,
- assistance in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.

The first selected head of UNTAET was Veira de Mello, a 51-year-old Brazilian diplomat, who has said the creation of a credible system of justice would be one of his top priorities, and he called for reconciliation between all sides in East Timor.

We will not be a superstructure that will attempt to impose itself on the Timorese people and on their representatives, on the contrary we are there to strengthen them, to help them to take affairs of their country into their own hands.<sup>18</sup>

Mr de Mello formed the National Consultative Council (NCC), which included UNTAET personnel, and representatives of the Catholic Church, CNRT and the pro-Jakarta groups.<sup>19</sup> The following section identifies the agenda.

## The Legal and Political Status of the Pro-Jakarta Group

The pro-Jakarta group consisted of two components with different backgrounds:

- the former leaders of Apodeti and some former leaders of UDT who later also became the former bureaucrats in the Indonesian occupation period; and,
- the militia, recruited and armed by the Indonesian Army.

The bureaucrats used their institutional power to provide facilities in support of the militia. Some of them acted as commanders of the militia and as militia political leaders. The

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<sup>18</sup> BBC News, 28/10/1999.

<sup>19</sup> There is another story waiting to be told that deals with the desperate competition among Australian and international organisations operating out of Darwin, desperately bidding to capitalise on these gaps in East Timor 'system'.

militia performed, and are still carrying out, terror actions against their own brothers and sisters.

Their cooperation with the Indonesian Army has been exercised since 1975, when Apodeti first sent their youth to West Timor to get military training. Apodeti and Kota leaders, together with some former UDT leader collaborated with *Bakin* (*Badan Intelijen Indonesia* – Indonesian Intelligence Coordinating Body) set up the Balibo Resolution to provide the legitimation for the Indonesian Army to invade the territory, at the cost of of more than 200,000 lives.<sup>20</sup>

When the Indonesian Government announced that it would hold a referendum on East Timor in 1999, *Bakin* and its special unit called *SGI* (*Satuan Tugas Intelijen* – Special Intelligence Unit) began to assist the pro-Jakarta group to promote mass support for the option of a Special Autonomous Region for East Timor.

This was done at two levels of actions: through a political campaign and by intimidation and terror actions.

In order to support the political campaign, the pro-Jakarta group formed a political wing with different names, eg BRTT, FPKD, Front of People of East Timor. With the latest consolidation on 24 June 1999 this group formed The United Front for East Timor Autonomy which is led by Francisco Lopes da Cruz, former leader of UDT and linked to Indonesian agents since 1975. The Pro-Integration Forces (PPI), constituting all the militia groups in East Timor, was formed earlier in 1999, with Joao da Silva Tavares as its leader. He was a former principle head of district administration, the *bupati* of Balibo.

It was widely believed that the now disgraced son-in-law of former President Suharto, General Prabowo Subianto, set up the first militia groups when he was the local commander in the early 1980s. From late 1998, there was a remarkable growth in pro-Jakarta militia groups. The former Minister and Chief of the Armed Forces, General Wiranto, has consistently denied any contact with the groups. But, according to the secret document from the Indonesian National Army (TNI) No. 010/IVS/PPI/VII/1999 addressed to Joao Tavares, the TNI has provided 15,000 units of modern combat guns for the PPI (Pro Integration Forces ).

Manuel Sousa, the leader of the Red and White Iron (*Besi Merah Putih*) militia group based in Liquica, also known as the honourable member of KOPASUS (Indonesian Army Special Forces), stated that everybody who joined his gang received a wage of 25,000 IRp (US\$ 4) per day.

With this massive logistic back-up and technical assistance from TNI, the militia groups expanded very quickly in the last two months of 1998. Every district had to form a militia group with a different name. By early 1999, Eurico Guterres, the Deputy Chief Commander of the Pro-Integration Forces claimed that PPI had 52,350 active members.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> James Dunn, p 53-69.

<sup>21</sup> Oposisi, 25/9/1999

In co-operation with the SGI and the regular armed forces, the militia spread terror and intimidation through massacres in Liquica, Dili, Suai, Dare, Same, and Ermera.

After the ballot, these militia groups continued the genocide with even more anger and brutality. Those suspected as pro-independence sympathisers, like students, journalists, priests, nuns, and sympathisers of the CNRT, were slaughtered, torn to pieces or burned to death. The militia forced the people to leave the territory and then looted their residences, shops and warehouses. At the end they burned those down to the ground.

Around 270,000 people fled or were forced over the border and confined in West Timor in several refugee camps. Here the militia groups took total control of the refugees. Killing of 'suspicious' refugees, torturing of 'uncooperative' refugees, and sexual harassment of the girls and women, became a daily open secret in the refugee camps, witnessed by many local people.

Despite this, in his first speech after the ballot for independence, Xanana Gusmao appealed to his enemies:

I appeal to the commander of the militias – Joao Tavares, Cancio de Carvalho, Eurico Guterres, Juaniku, Edmundo, and others as well. I appeal to all brothers and sisters to think properly. We can create a new Timor Lorosa'e in love and peace.<sup>22</sup>

At an open-air televised service in the capital Dili, Bishop Belo told a crowd of some 5,000 people that militia leaders who had caused death and destruction were welcome to return:

East Timor is your home and needs you. We must forgive, but first you must explain to the Timorese people why you burned homes and killed so many people.<sup>23</sup>

Whether the militia could have attempted to return to East Timor following the appeal of the CNRT and the Catholic Church leader to join the people to build the country, is a question without an answer. But, as long as they could get the necessary logistic support and legal protection from the Indonesian authority, the terror and intimidation in West Timor refugee camps continued in the name of the right of self-determination and integration into the Republic of Indonesia.

As Xanana said:

The birth of the Timorese Nation cannot take place in the midst of division and marred by discord and rancour. Peace, reconciliation,

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<sup>22</sup> BBC News, 4/9/1999

<sup>23</sup> BBC News, 31/10/1999

understanding and harmony are fundamental for the political stability, for the social and economic progress of our country.

Despite pressure by the international community, only 60,000 of the 270,000 refugees had been repatriated by the end of November 1999. To prevent the refugees from going home, the militia implemented a terror action in the refugee camps as well as on the road to the transit harbour.<sup>24</sup> Additionally the militia threatened the refugees with lies and disinformation. They were told that the Australian troops were raping women and that fighting was taking place in East Timor. Some believed that the militia intended to keep the refugees as hostages and use them as a human shield.

On the other hand, many returning militiamen were themselves harassed and beaten by angry people in East Timor. So long as the UNTAET were unable to safeguard the returning militiamen, who now seek repatriation with their family, they wanted to remain in West Timor.<sup>25</sup>

To ensure the safety and justice for the returning militia the establishment of an entirely new justice system is needed. This should include: the administration of courts, prosecution services and prisons; the development of legal policies; the reviewing and drafting of legislation for the goals and purposes of the State; and, the assessment of the quality of justice in East Timor, including training requirements. A system of this nature will require at least 3–5 years to implement.

In the immediate term, the militiamen have to decide whether to return to East Timor or to remain in West Timor. The militia issue needs a special approach and demands urgent action.

If the militiamen opt to return under current conditions they could be harassed or killed by the angry East Timorese people. Perhaps UNTAET should put them in detention for a period of time until the justice system is ready and the courts are operating with professional prosecutors and public defenders.

Long-term detention of the militia will lead to other problems. Militia who are alleged to be criminals could claim the status of political detainees and demand adequate treatment. It will require a huge budget to cover the cost of holding 50,000 detainees.

If they decide to stay in West Timor, and the Indonesian Army supports and protects them, the militia will become a long-term guerrilla force to annoy security in East Timor. If the Indonesian Army refuses to support them, then they will be forced to survive as armed gangs. This 50,000-strong para-military force would become a serious threat for security in this region requiring immense budgets to defend and ensure the security of the new born East Timor State.

Therefore, it is imperative, that the pro-independence group open dialogue with the pro-Jakarta group to resolve the militia problem at the juridical and political levels as soon as

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<sup>24</sup> Joan Collins, 11/11/1999

<sup>25</sup> Joan Collins, 17/11/1999

possible. Because the militia are supported by the Indonesian Army, the peace-dialogue should include the Indonesian authorities.

## National Reconciliation

The scale of suffering by the East Timorese people is almost unimaginable. An entire people has been removed during the forced integration period into Indonesia through betrayal, intrigue and intimidation. More than 200,000 people have been slaughtered, many more have been brutally tortured. National reconciliation is urgently needed, even though it sounds impossible.

Although the CNRT and church leaders have appealed for forgiveness, can they really forgive the betrayal of evil criminals who have slaughtered their own brothers and sisters, their respected priests and nuns, their parents and friends? Is justice possible? Can a genuine reconciliation be created?

The displaced people of East Timor return to their home village and find no home. Many of them are still looking for their missing relatives. Every day, people discover new graves. This will continue for an uncertain period. How long before the East Timorese people are strong enough to forgive their brothers and sisters who have perpetrated such unforgivable crimes?

The initiator of the national reconciliation cannot be an outside body like UNTAET. It is exclusively a domestic affair. It cannot be solved solely through juridical procedure. It needs a humanitarian, religious and political approach.

Xanana's appeal to these militia leaders to come home and build the future of East Timor together with their brothers and sisters is a building block. This is a very significant position for a man who has fought against the Indonesian Army, was betrayed by his brothers and sisters for seventeen years, captured and taken to Jakarta in 1992, and, sentenced to life imprisonment (later commuted to 20 years). To make such an appeal to his long time enemies surely is a major gesture.

In late 1979, Xanana founded the *Concelho Nacional da Resistancia Maubere* –National Council of Maubere Resistance, the CNRT, a coalition or umbrella organisation for everybody who was committed to resistance against Indonesia, regardless to which political party, ethnic or religious group they belonged.<sup>26</sup> He created a widely accepted political organisation which allowed his former political enemies, the UDT, and Apodeti leader and supporters, to join with Falintil. With his negotiating skills he even convinced the Bishop of Dili, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo to obtain the support of the Church for the independence movement. From this moment, CNRM became a symbol of national reconciliation.

Only a few months after the declaration of CNRM, guerilla activities were increasing rapidly, supported by thousands of Timorese deserting from the regular units (744 and 745

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<sup>26</sup> James Dunn, p 281

Battalion), *Hansip* (civil defence), public servants and students. Many UDT and Apodeti leaders became militantly sympathetic to both Falintil and CNRT movements and fought in three different ways: armed struggle by Falintil and political and diplomatic struggle by the CNRT. Timorese bureaucrats such as Mario Carrascalao (even as Governor of East Timor), Abilio Soares (even as Bupati of Manatuto) and many others secretly supported the Falintil movement.

As we know, Xanana won the battle with the withdrawal of Indonesia from East Timor. He now continues to lead the new battle to bring his Nation to a sustainable peaceful and democratic country.

It depends on the UNTAET officers whether they can and will rely on Xanana's capacity to play a more active role in resolving the *militia problem* in order to create national reconciliation. They must draw on his talent and take a cultural and religious approach to reconciliation.

## To Protect East Timor From Imperialism – Aid

Like other post-colonial countries, as soon as the majority of the people voted against the Indonesian occupation, East Timor became a target for bilateral and multilateral aid, as well as foreign capital investment.

Within two months following the ballot, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank and other bodies had sent a 40-member delegation to East Timor to conduct a two-week survey to examine development needs to be presented to donors in Tokyo. Klaus Rohland, World Bank Country Director for Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands said 'East Timor should not start with any debt, it could rely on non-refundable grant aid for the first years.' He added that, 'to rebuild the shattered economy will likely cost up to US\$300 million'. The humanitarian agencies have appealed for 199 million dollars to cover the first nine months relief work.<sup>27</sup>

To lead Interfet, Australia spent A\$2 billion, and an extra A\$60 million, for the humanitarian relief. Portugal's generous offer to underwrite East Timor's balance of payments for five years, amounting to about US\$100 million year is in addition to the Euro\$60 million which has been spent since May 1999.

Bilateral and multilateral aids from around the world must be used to relieve the humanitarian immediate need and to rebuild the infrastructure and public service sectors.

It would be naive to believe that foreign aid is given without any assumptions by donor countries. The transfer of resources from developed countries enables poorer countries to buy capital equipment, to improve technology, to educate the people. Once the economy is developing, then further aid will help to speed up the rate of growth and advance the day when the country becomes independent of aid. That is the positive case for aid. But, as

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<sup>27</sup> Singapore News, 18/11/1999

experiences from many developing countries have shown, there is another less positive side to aid: namely, many developing countries become dependent on the foreign aid.

Foreign aid to East Timor, at least in the transitional phase, is managed by UNTAET and NCC, therefore it is their responsibility to protect East Timor from the development of imperialism between the donor States and East Timor. To avoid a new type of tyranny developing, the majority of the Maubere people should also have the power to decide over living conditions and be able to resist equality.

## Democracy and the Legitimacy of UNTAET

In paragraph eight of the *UN Security Council Resolution 1272*, the UN stresses the need for UNTAET to consult, and cooperate closely, with the East Timorese people with a view to the development of local democratic institutions. Prior to meeting this need the UNTAET should officially appoint a body that is legitimate to represent itself as East Timorese.

On 27 November 1999, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Vieira de Mello, headed a 15-member National Consultative Committee which included representatives of the Church and CNRT (Xanana Gusmao).<sup>28</sup>

This move to include the Church and CNRT implicitly recognises the importance of both elements as representative bodies for the people of East Timor.

But, because of its authority, the Church is not supposed to mix in political affairs. It has no obligation to any political system. According to Catholicism, the Church must encompass developments with the evolution of time and then attempt to interpret change in the light of the Bible (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.4). As the Church is willing to help people achieve their perfect progress, manifesting public interest to a more humane community, the Church has strong responsibility to promote justice, peace, love and freedom through its teaching authority. This authority comes in the form of cooperation with all people with good intentions and obeying the teacher's instructions to teach all Nations.

The CNRT is the umbrella of the coalition movement for the resistance against the Indonesian occupancy and now apparently has sufficient legitimacy to represent the pro-independence East Timorese. But, since the withdrawal of the Indonesians, the coalition has lost its existential reason to exist. As Jose Ramos Horta, a CNRT Vice President, claimed after returning home for the first time in 24 years of exile, 'within one year the umbrella organisation would be disbanded'.

This enabled it to meet the requirements of UNTAET. So long as CNRT is still recognised as the umbrella coalition organisation, it should form a temporary people's assembly to consult UNTAET for the basic affairs of the Nation. CNRT can also be a framework for a national language, a name for the State, national currency, a national constitution, the rule

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<sup>28</sup> BBC News 27/11/1999

of law, national defence and security system, finance and foreign investment regulation, and so on.

If NCC is considered to be the 'temporary people's assembly' the question is whether the eleven non-UNTAET members would cover the whole range of interest groups within the Nation; for instance, religious groups (including Protestant, Moslem and vernacular believes), gender representatives, labourers, peasants, press, environment activists, teachers, students, scientists, political fractions, vernacular community leaders (liurai), and so on. More importantly is the legitimacy of the method through which members of the NCC are selected.

## Democratic Structures and Institutions

To achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness, both the NCC and UNTAET must deliver sufficient training and capacity-building to enable members to exercise their function as representatives of a transitional Parliament, both at the national and district levels.

There must be an assurance that all decisions are made through a universal democratic process and that this process truly represents the wishes of the majority of the people, rather than simply the interests of NCC members.

Already there have been instances of poor judgement due to a lack of consultation. Mass confusion following the decision of the Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary-General to allow the Portuguese overseas bank, BNU, to operate in East Timor is an instance and could have been avoided. The Representative should have been consulted by a legitimate people's assembly. Instead, he relied on a couple of senior leaders of the CNRT. His decision to allow BNU to operate solely with Escudos could bind the East Timorese people to a new colonialism of the Portuguese, or worse.<sup>29</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to describe the social and political circumstances existing in East Timor and to identify unresolved problems. The paper has illustrated measures required to redevelop a social structure and a democratic system for East Timor that can ensure the creation of a modern Nation with a self-sufficient economy.

When the majority of East Timorese dismissed the ties with Indonesia through the popular ballot on 30 August 1999, the road to independence moved to a conclusion. UNTAET will operate its mandate under the authority of the Security Council, vested in the Secretary-General and exercised by the Special Representative.

The East Timorese need the power and resources to resolve their national problems in their own way. This includes the achievement of sustainable national reconciliation, agreement

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<sup>29</sup> Mark Dodd, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3/12/99

on the national identity, on a national currency, and, on an appropriate legislative structure, without intervention from foreign forces.

It would be tragic if, after two years of UNTAET's presence in East Timor, the East Timorese did not achieve their desired democratic outcome.

Mr Vieira de Mello incorporated two key elements in the National Consultative Committee to carry out his mandate: the Catholic Church and the CNRT. In the meantime UNTAET must grant the East Timorese more autonomous power to resolve their internal problems.

The influx of foreign aid will create a new class division caused by tremendous inequality within the East Timorese society. Foreign aid could also pave the way for economical and technological dependency, leading to impoverishment through the deterioration of terms of trade. To avoid this, equal access to means of production – eg land, education, skill, information, capital – for every citizen is indispensable. The economy could not solely depend on export oriented production and trade, but rather rely on its own recourse to produce as much as possible its own consumer goods.

Finally, Constitutional independence cannot ensure the economical, technological and, eventually, political independence of East Timor. Nor will it grant the Maubere people independence from illiteracy, from being landless peasants, from being badly exploited labourers both in the primary and tertiary sectors, or even from being discriminated against as citizens. Independence has never been granted. It can only be gathered through enduring struggle. The East Timorese must survive, too many people sacrificed their lives to free East Timor from foreign occupation over the past quarter century, and before.

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