

Timor Leste

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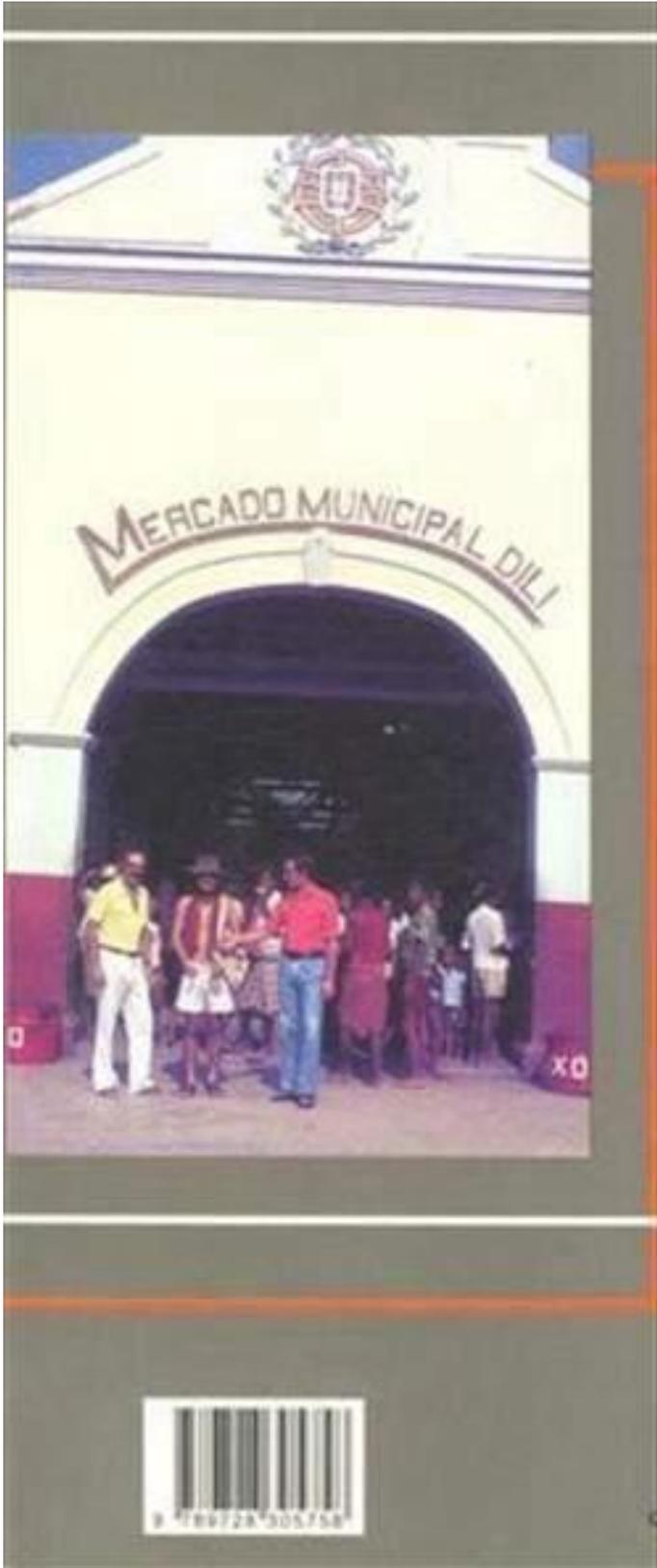
The Secret Files

O Dossier Secreto

1973 - 1975



contemporânea



CHAPTER I: (Prelude) EAST TIMOR 1973

1. UPON ARRIVAL

Timor has always been enveloped in legends that only the distance can create. In Portugal, Timor was but a dream, quietness, the one thousand and one nights of the exotic Orient, the tropical sortilege. Upon arrival, the European could only feel disillusioned. Without forewarning one is flying over a sterile island, filled with mountains and rocks, the rustic scenery intersected by dried riverbeds, rocky and abrupt cliffs facing the sea, a ravaged land, without any signs of life or the trademark of humanity.

Timor is indeed this land, sparsely arranged bamboo huts unveiled under the plane. The visitor questions: "How is this possible? - Timor, is it this? The light plane draws concentric circles. Unsettled passengers search in vain for the airport. Suddenly, behind an unanticipated hill, halfway through a daring tilt there it is, the small 'T' of the runway. The control tower of the tourist leaflets is nowhere to be seen the dusty building with the straw ceiling is the bar, customs and the boarding room. This is the International airport of a Vila Salazar, otherwise known as Baucau. It only exists in the geography texts of the Portuguese high schools.

A strange crowd piles up outside. This is the ever-baffling spectacle of the arrival of "*cockatoo-bote*" (big cockatoo) or the "*steely paws*,"¹ the ceremony of a foreign God, coming down from skies. The people attend this sacred manifestation as if it was the very start of yet another religion. Their coloured clothes contrast with the many suns they have been exposed to. It is five in the morning, dusty and hot.²

A mute surprise composes the silent mouths of the newly arrived. Here the formalities have a new taste, like the slowly rhythmic waiting of people who seem to have centuries of life ahead of them. At some distance, under a large shed with a tin roof, an old Bedford lorry is sheltering from the sun with an aged canopy protecting the wooden stools, on top of the cabin a very pompous sign: "Public Coach Service Dili-Baucau."

The mountain track turns along the sea, descending slowly to Baucau; a girlie town ensconced between groves of palm trees and lush tropical rain forests. From the back of the lorry, these are brand-new images of a stillborn land. We drive past men dressed in a 'lipa'³ clutching fighting cocks between the naked arms and the torso as they walk. Baucau has a few stone and stucco houses and the exotic air of a colourful population. From the ruins of the markets, one invokes unknown Roman temples.

¹ Local names given by the Timorese to a plane.

² As a conscripted army officer in the Supply Battalion, and not a professional army man, the author was one of many unwilling followers of the (future) military junta, or the National Salvation Army Junta, in Lisbon, forced to choose between two years fighting the African Independence movements in Mozambique/Angola or three years solitude in this remote but at this time peaceful land.

³ Sarong-like skirt: garment of coloured silk, cotton or cloth worn by both men and women originated in Malaysia.

A quick stop for a sandwich and lemonade in the military headquarters, at the Officers' Mess facing a small swimming pool, which somehow seems out of place, then we are back on Highway #1 to Dili.

Rugged cliffs and escarpments disgorge into a multicoloured sea of white coral banks. The mountain trail sometimes draws close to the abyss and our hearts go into suspended animation. Along the way, we cross, large, dry riverbeds that time has converted to occasional roads. The gravelled soil, the undefined colour between the brown and green, the "palapas"⁴ disguised by the vegetation, all provide a sad image of rocks and hills. The bays, primitive and unconquered by boats of any type or size, the beaches filled with jetsam, unveil unsuspected paradises.

It is hard to catch a glimpse of the locals with their smiles. I gasp startled, but no, it is not blood dripping from their mouths, it is only "masca" - a mixture of quicklime and "harecan"⁵ chewing it, is the psychological placebo for the food that does not exist. The red smile hides the centuries-old hunger. (January 1998, I listen to José Ramos Horta appealing to international solidarity to defuse the hunger that still assails the territory).

Suddenly, after passing by and leaving behind villages that only the wordless memory could describe, here is Dili, 212 km and eleven hours later. An extremely large avenue spreads the heavy dust to the neighbouring 'palapas' and some concrete one-story houses with tin roofs.

Entering Dili by the east one can see how the Chinese and Timorese share the promiscuity of lack of proper urban structures. Dili is a long plain by the calm lake-like sea, with a vast majestic bay stressed in the background by the superimposing shadow of the Ataúro Island. An incipient harbour shelters an aged gunboat where the Portuguese flag undulates. A long avenue accompanies the shore along Dili, ending in the Lighthouse residential quarter, where colonial villas built after World War II lodge all heads of department and the upper crust of army officialdom.

At this time, Dili has 16 kilometres of bitumen sealed roads and streets. Three houses are the only survivors of the pre-war Dili but for an airport where a Land Rover has to clear the runway from buffaloes, Balinese cows and wild pigs. The commercial artery crosses Dili from East to West, like the centre. This is the backbone of the capital, with its '*Palácio do Governo*' [a government house pompously called Palace] and the Museum whose name states the emptiness of all the treasures exported by previous governors and colonisers, through the centuries.

A dead museum, two traffic police officers at peak hours and some people sitting leisurely on the esplanades or cafés. There at night, we can encounter the real "*bas fonds*"⁶ of Dili, not only the local prostitutes but also the slot and poker machines. The underworld, the underground life, the drowning of hopes and dreams long forgotten, a few restaurants with the bars serving Chinese tucker, bars like the "Texas" and the "Tropicália" where the soldiers and the booze silence

⁴ Rectangular-shaped huts made of rattan (palm stems).

⁵ Harecan is a tobacco-like leaf.

⁶ Underworld.

a progressively growing distance from Portugal.

Dili, September 1973: a lifeless city dying on its own ashes every night, between the silence and the sad voice of the tokés, the putrid heat and the winged flight of the roaches. During the day one can see few private cars and many official black vehicles.

Many motorbikes circulate between the army jeeps driven by the officers' chauffeurs who wait, patiently in front of the high school for the wives-cum-teachers of the Portuguese army officers. Are they at the hairdresser or at the primary school? The military personnel walking or being driven in Berliets and Unimogs. In addition, the many Chinese are mingling among the Timorese. Dili is this - desolation.

On the hills, in a forgetful location, as a memento of a lost war, the military complex with its headquarters and the insalubrious barracks. Could have been a wonderful spot, two hundred years before, well defended by the surrounding mountains, but its current locale was out of place and out of space. Further up, on the hills, 500 metres above the sea, in a prominent location tucked in a leafy valley, the two hospitals (one small modern group of buildings for the civilians, another large old-style building for the military).

This pretentiously European City is sad. The palapas surmounting the almost non-existent footpaths, there live the Timorese without electricity or water. Ten or fifteen kids roaming around, does it really matter if the misery is still the same and will always be the same?

"This is the land; the sun first sees when rising" the official motto proclaims on the upper crest of the coat of arms of the then Portuguese Timor. With this, I bequeath the images and the words. They are already history, and they will not repeat themselves in a thousand years time. This we will witness, in the following pages, we will show the testimony - how to convert peaceful Pacific colonies into war scenarios.

2. PROSPECTS - OIL AND AUSTRALIAN TOURISTS

TIMOR is roughly 600 kilometres off Darwin and 2,200 kilometres from Jakarta. In the Timor Sea, sandwiched between Australia and East Timor, there is an oil reserve considered to be among the 20 biggest in the world. Oil exploration starts in the late sixties with speculation that it can and will change dramatically the face of the then Portuguese Timor. The colonial administration, very lackadaisical for the past 400 years, suddenly dreams of an upsurge of wealth, which can perhaps catapult the entire Portuguese economy and stave off the impending end of the dictatorship.

In small numbers, people are lured to Timor with highly adventurous and speedily drafted projects. In practical terms, though, both Timor Oil Ltd. drilling on the South Coast (Suai) by very primitive means and the more sophisticated offshore explorations by Burma Oil/BHP show no large oil reserves.

Burma Oil almost creates havoc in the population. By operating a couple of helicopters with equipment and personnel

for six months in 1974, and flying them back to their headquarters in Perth, twice a week, it feeds rumours of an imminent oil discovery. Then, suddenly a third oil group, "Oceanic," installs the first oilrig platform on the Timor Sea. The small local media contingent start believing that the ballyhoo is probably more fire than the smoke initially assumed, yet no leaks are forthcoming, from either Portuguese Government sources or others. The mystery surrounding these oil drills is then much subdued. A dozen and a half years later the question "why" will be resoundingly answered by the Australian and Indonesian governments.

In the distant days of the 70s, exploitation of tourism in Portuguese Timor is at least embryonic. The government plans to attract more Australians, although the lack of proper air, land and sea transport coupled with the island's very limited capabilities for a hospitality industry make this impossible to achieve. The economic potential of the tourism industry is well understood - notwithstanding the political future of the island - and government figures are presenting a rosy picture of more and more Australians using East Timor to go to Bali, as the cheapest route available.

Knowing the high cost of air travel in Australia, the ever-growing attraction of Bali as a paradise and major tourist resort in the area, is not hard to understand why most travellers prefer the cheaper Darwin/Dili/Bali route. Of course, there are a few minor hiccups, like having, sometimes, to wait for a month to get a seat on the small nine-seater that biweekly links Dili to Kupang⁷.

Occasionally there was a chance of going to the Indonesian border in some ancient truck, crisscrossing the territory on the dilapidated remnants of the Japanese made roads. The best hotel in Dili, the Hotel Turismo, charges (then) up to AUD, \$ 40.00 per night - bed and breakfast, but some more laid-back hostels and boarding houses can provide that for almost a third of the cost. There is also the government-sponsored Beach House "Hippie Hilton," which provides a straw roof and running water for 1\$00 Escudos (approx. AUD \$0.40).

Other than tourism and oil exploration, the colonial administration's main priorities are agriculture and civil engineering (mainly in the building industry). Commercial and industrial activities are left to private enterprise. Similarly, to what occurs elsewhere in Southeast Asia and in Indochina the commercial activities are all in the hands of a Chinese minority, who specialise in retailing. Very industrious and active, ignoring consumerism, they have about a dozen important trading companies with total dominance of commerce in East Timor.

Petrol and oil are imported from Singapore and Australia; milk and flour from Australia; concrete and cement from Japan and Taiwan; machines and various technical equipment from Japan, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore and Europe; textiles and shoes from Macao and Hong Kong. The main exports are coffee beans, copra and coconut, timber, peanuts and rubber, but the only one that really matters in terms of volume is coffee. Although the capital outlays is small they represent locally a huge investment and the industries are then no more than artisanship and very incipient.

⁷ Capital of Indonesia's West Timor province.

The latest statistics provided by the Portuguese administration, refer that, in 1973, no more than 90 companies with a capital outlay of Escudos 21,000,000\$00 (approx. 840,000 at 1973 exchange rates) provide jobs for 500 people in sawmills, bakeries, soft drink factories. The arts and crafts although of a very high quality have a minimal weight in export terms being confined to jewellery, ceramics and weaving.

3. HISTORY

In 1511, the Portuguese Afonso de Albuquerque conquers Malacca and simultaneously a small armada sail away, led by António de Abreu, on its way to conquer the Moluccas, then already known by their spices (nutmeg and clover). Abreu reaches the Solor Is. in 1512, near the Flores and 100 Km. NE of Timor. Three years later, the then Commander of the Fortress of Malacca, Rui Brito Patela on a dispatch to HRH the King Dom Manuel I of Portugal mentions the vast expanse of sandalwood in Timor. By 1515, two books printed in Portugal mention Timor as a rich island where Franciscan missionaries are sent to in 1513.

The Portuguese Dominican friars arrive by the end of the 50s. Soon thereafter, the Topasses (Black Portuguese descending from Portuguese sailors, soldiers and traders) began arriving in Timor, from neighbouring islands, spreading Portuguese culture and influence, and controlling the local trading networks.

By 1651, the Dutch establish themselves on the western part of the island to get sandalwood and slaves, and soon thereafter, they are in conflict with the Portuguese.

During the pre-colonial period, the Javanese Empires whose fortunes are high between the X and the XV centuries never have any influence over East Timor. The island is also unaffected by the religious influences that mark most of the Malay population from Java to the outer islands.

During the first centuries of the Christian era, those people are influenced by Hindu polytheist currents, in the wake of immigrant waves from India. A few centuries later, namely during the 8th century, it is Buddhism that will make its mark. It is by then that the biggest Buddhist temple in the world is built at Borobodur. To this day, Indonesia is the most populous predominantly Islamic country in the world, with around 88 percent of its 192 million inhabitants officially professing the Islamic cult.

When the Portuguese merchants and missionaries arrive in East Timor by the beginning of the XVI century, in stark contrast to the rest of the archipelago, its population is animist and knows no written words. Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism nor even Islam has penetrated the people of Timor, totally untouched by the dominant cultural influences of Malaysia, Java, and Bali. There is by then, huge trade between China, Malacca and other regions now belonging to Indonesia.

Timor had sophisticated contacts with the world, well before the arrival of the Portuguese. The kingdom of Belos (see below) was encompassing most of the island and the Chinese were frequent visitors to these lands. The local indigenous

calendar closely follows the Chinese. The pony or Kuda is of Asian ancestry and existed well before the arrival of the European. Musical instruments are Asian, in both design and sound. It is part of the Chinese lore that the Liurai of Besicama (the old Belos' capital) paid an annual tribute to the Chinese Emperor before the (Portuguese) Dominican friars were established in the island after 1566. By then, the power of liurais was based upon the riches in sandalwood (said to be the best in the world) and this was the cause of intertribal wars. Liurais increasingly needed land to expand their sandalwood plantations and thus, their empire.

Timor is already divided then into two confederations of kingdoms:

- One under the ægis of the Sombay kingdom, or confederation of Servian on the western part of the island [corresponding to what is now West Timor],
- The other was under the supremacy of the Behale (or Wehale) kingdom or confederation of Belos in East Timor.

The latter is by then using a common lingua franca, Tetum. The division of Timor in two halves has historical reasons dating back to pre-colonial times. In 1651, the Dutch defeat the Portuguese and occupy Kupang on the far western part of the island, before they start penetrating on the western side of the island. This indicates how ancient the colonial division of the island is.

During the third quarter of the 16th century, the Portuguese establish themselves permanently on the island, through Dominican friars who exercise a progressive cultural and religious influence whilst the Portuguese domination expands. Then the Portuguese have commercial and religious interests in the island to be defended and later in 1701, the first Governor takes its post. Lifau, later called Oé-cusse is the first Portuguese fortress built early in the eighteenth century, to become the then official capital.

The 1750 Census names only 15 Europeans, most of whom are missionaries on the island. In 1970, a third of the Timorese was Catholic and only 0.04 percent of the population [234 people] are Muslim. Two-thirds of the population remain faithful to local animist beliefs.

The first Governor of Timor, a very junior officer intending to subjugate the native chieftains "Régulos"⁸ confronts a massive rebellion, culminating in 1726 with the loss of the fortified town of Cailaco, close to the border.

By then, the Dutch have already threatened to expand their domination of the territory thus forcing the Portuguese to withdraw from Lifau and establish a new capital at Dili, a fortified harbour town. Nothing much happens during the next century, except that the British replace the Dutch briefly, from 1812 until 1815.

Until 1844, Timor and Macao are part of the Portuguese Empire of India (or the Indies) under the jurisdiction of the Vice

⁸ Kinglets.

Roy of India. In that same year, Timor and Macao become an autonomous government, independent from the Portuguese Indies. A Portuguese and Dutch Treaty in 1860 sets the border limits, dividing the island into two halves and this treaty is approved by The Hague Court in 1913. Later on, 1896, Timor becomes autonomous from Macao.

During the governorship of Afonso de Castro (1859-1869), a new system of forced coffee cultivation was imposed, and this soon led to make it the big export earner. Sandalwood was already declining by then and almost became extinct a century later. For building up roads, a new system of forced labour is in force between 1884 and 1890.

A new Governor, Celestino da Silva inaugurated in 1894 alleges the lack of development of the island and initiates a very severe repression against the local indigenous people. A new tax is imposed on all males between the ages of 18 and 60 against the will of peasants forced to work even harder to pay it. Even as late as 1975 this tax (or **IMPOSTO**, as it was called, was still being contested by the population). Under the leadership of the liurai Dom Boaventura of Manu-Fahi, a series of rebellions took place for a period of 16 years, ending in a general uprising throughout East Timor between 1910 and 1912.

Timor is not considered “pacified” until 1913, and under the allegation of being promoted by the Dutch, the new Governor, Filomeno da Câmara again confronts the rebellious locals through the sheer exercise of military power.

The locals, killing numerous residents, burning and looting buildings, including the Government Palace attack even Dili. Several Portuguese soldiers and officers are killed. Only with the aid of Portuguese troops from Mozambique is the rebellion put down with 3 424 East Timorese dead, 12 567 wounded, 289 Portuguese killed and 600 wounded.⁹

Timor is the most neglected of all Portuguese colonies, as Alfred Russell Wallace, a British explorer wrote in the 1860s *“The government is a most miserable one. Nobody seems to care the least about the improvement of the country... there is not a mile of the road made beyond the town (Dili).”*¹⁰

After the rebellion, the Portuguese continued with their forced imposition of cultivation of coffee, copra (the dried kernel of the coconut from which coconut oil is extracted) and sandalwood, but with very limited results. At the same time, this marks the beginning of the real Portuguese colonisation of the island throughout the territory, with the assistance of the local tribes and their Régulos and liurais. The Portuguese also start using ‘*assimilados*’ (‘assimilated’), natives who they could trust to defend the Portuguese interests. As late as 1950 there were still only 568 people considered European, 2 022 mestizos (mixed race creoles) in a total population of 442 378.

A visiting historian describes Dili, on the eve of the Second World War:

⁹ ‘Portuguese Timor: A Rough Island Story, 1515-1960’ C. R. Boxer, History Today, Vol. 10, No. 5, May 1960: 349-355, also quoted in ‘East Timor’s Unfinished Struggle’ by Constâncio Pinto and Matthew Jardine, South End Press, Boston, Ma, USA 1997 and in ‘East Timor: a people betrayed’ James Dunn, Jacaranda Press, Queensland, 1983

¹⁰ Alfred Russell Wallace quoted in ‘East Timor’s Unfinished Struggle,’ by Constâncio Pinto and Matthew Jardine, South End Press, Boston, MA, USA, 1997.

'Having no electricity and no town water supply: there were no paved roads, no telephone service (other than to the houses and offices of the senior officials), and not even a wharf for cargo handling.'

The efforts of Imperial Japan to establish a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was a euphemism for a colonial dominance, that helped start the Pacific War in an attempt to end the Western domination of Asia. This was also a means of Japan acquiring raw materials for its industries and markets to export its goods, apart from providing them with the immense workforce. Swiftly, the western powers were thrashed out of Asia, namely in French Indochina, in the United States' Philippines and the Dutch Eastern Indies.

As a response to the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, Allied forces decide to use the island of Timor as a forward line of defence against the impending Japanese advance. Notwithstanding the protest of the Portuguese administration, Dutch and Australian units land in Dili and Kupang in the same December 1941, just ten days after Pearl Harbour. Two months later, Japan attacks the island, and more than 20,000 of its troops are held at bay by the natives and Australian commandos in East Timor (Portuguese Timor).

In January 1943, during World War 2, the island falls under Japanese forces, with some Australian and Dutch defeated units resorting to guerrilla counterattacks against the Japanese. During 1942 and until 1945, the local people fight the barbarian occupation very hard, and between 20 and 40 thousand died and were killed trying to protect and help the Europeans (Portuguese, Australians and some Dutch).

True heroes of this period are the "Régulos" ¹¹ Dom Aleixo Corte-Real, Dom José Nunes and Dom Jeremias de Luca, whose people are killed, beheaded or mutilated defending the Portuguese flag ¹² - a true symbol of adoration, sometimes misconstrued as a symbol of Portugalism. In 1945, the then Dutch East Indies, including West Timor, become the Republic of Indonesia.

A Japanese Commander, Iwamura Shouachi, describes how cruel and devastating was the Japanese occupation:¹³

"It is painful to speak today of the sacrifices and burdens we forced upon the East Timorese... We ordered chiefs to mobilise people en masse for road construction... to work without receiving food or compensation. Because of food shortage, people died of starvation every day. Food for Japanese soldiers and horses to transport ammunition was confiscated from the people, and some of the troops under my command raped Timorese women."

Maybe that if the Allied forces had left neutral East Timor alone, 60,000 of its people did not have to die because of the brutal Japanese occupation and the Allied bombings. After the Armistice, the Portuguese Administration chose for new "Régulos" ¹⁴ people it can rely on, although most of these without the royal legitimacy that will impose them as acceptable by the local tribes and communities. The Portuguese use the same brutal methods and forced labour they had been trying

¹¹ Kinglets or local kings presiding over a shire.

¹² All types of the Portuguese flag were treated almost like "lulic" (sacred) symbols throughout the East Timor history.

¹³ As quoted in Matthew Jardine's "East Timor: Genocide in Paradise", Odonian Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1995.

¹⁴ Local king presiding to a shire.

before the war. This provokes an infamous rebellion in 1959 at Uato-Lari (on the eastern coast) where thousands of local warriors marched on to Dili to take on the Portuguese.

For some historians, the whole rebellion is somewhat provoked by Indonesian agitators, but it leaves no doubt - at all - of a frightening situation.

Eventually, a “Bére -Bi¹⁵” betrays her people and raises the alarm on New Year’s Eve at the social function held at the Sporting Club in Dili¹⁶. Reinforcements are immediately sent from Goa (then still a Portuguese colony in India) and no blood is shed. Hundreds of Timorese patriots are then deported to the African colonies of Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, and S. Tomé e Príncipe. For the people of East Timor, war will only return 16 years later.

Between 1945 and June 1974, the Indonesian Government abiding by International Laws states at the United Nations and outside that it has no territorial claims over East Timor.

Back in 1960, Timor is considered a non-autonomous territory under Portuguese administration, according to Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960. Between 1962 and until 1973 the U.N. General Assembly approves various resolutions supporting the right to self-determination of East Timor as well as other Portuguese colonies, then, euphemistically called Overseas Provinces (Províncias Ultramarinas) just like the French who called them ‘Territoires d’outre mer’.

4. POPULATION

1) CENSUS

In the 1970 Census, there were 609,477 inhabitants, of which 599,891 (98%) Timorese; 6,120 Chinese (1%); 1,939 Creoles (0.3 %); 1,463 Europeans (0.24%); 42 Indians and 22 Blacks. Three or four years later, the Chinese are already 15,000; the Europeans including Army Personnel and their families are about 3,000; in addition, there are some few hundred Indians and Muslims. The means used by the authorities in the Census are incomplete and absolutely out of touch with hermetic population, like the one they address.

The population pyramid by sex shows predominantly a male component (51.9%) or 138 men for every 100 women. The main urban centres are Dili with 6,000 people in the main district, and 20,000 in suburban areas, followed by Baucau, Bobonaro, Ermera, Maubisse, Balibó, Ossú, Viqueque, Same and Liquiçá. The island of Ataúro, just in front of Dili has 3,000 inhabitants.

¹⁵ Bére Bi, Bui Bére, Bi Bére, name given to a Female Timorese.

¹⁶ Filipe Themudo Barata, governor 1959 -1963 in his book ‘Timor Contemporâneo’, ed. Equilíbrio Editorial Lda, Lisbon, 1998, gives a totally different explanation of the events that took place while he was on his way to Timor, to take up his post.

II) RELIGION

The religious breakdown figures shows that 153,000 people consider themselves Roman Catholic (25.1%), whilst 2,400 are Protestants (0.4%); other Christian denominations 400 (0.07%); 900 Muslims (0.15%), and the remaining 452,777 (74.3%) with no religion stated.

Of these, the vast majority practice animist or pagan rites, worshipping ancestors and other spirits and headhunting is an activity well entrenched until earlier this century, as it happens in neighbouring Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya and Borneo.

By 1996, Vatican statistics¹⁷ indicate 692 000 Roman Catholics in a population of 834 000 (more than 80% of the population, as compared with 25% in 1970).

Each village has a sacred stone house and a surrounding taboo area with a custodian priest. Important occasions are marked by ceremonies and illness and death believed to be caused by sorcery. Cliff Morris wrote about this in 1992¹⁸:

“The society was very class conscious. Before the Portuguese, the lowest class was LUTUN (the cattle keepers) then ATAN (slaves), EMA RAI (common people), DATO (nobility and royalty). Interspersed were MATAN DOOK (matándoc, doctor), BUAN (sorcerer), MALULIK (keeper of sacred relics) and Liurai (King). These were inherited upper-class positions. From the Dato came ASU’UAIN (warriors). Marriage offered the only means of rising above the class into which one had been born.”

Yet, according to that author, both Christians and non-Christians alike were living with the Klamar (the souls of the dead) who had not yet gone to heaven or were unable to leave this earth for any reason. The Timorese believed that a wandering soul was always on the lookout to invade (or to return to) the body of a living person where it would cause untold havoc and eventual death unless the Klamar was persuaded to leave its new home. These spirits would enter the body through a number of orifices (nose, eyes, but never the mouth or genitals).

Not all were evil spirits. Some were guardians that protected and kept at a distance the bad spirits and in times of danger or crisis, would come and alert to keep the stability of those at risk.

“Life in an animist atmosphere such as this was a continual struggle. Matandócs (doctors) could invoke any herbal potions and fetishes to nullify a HOROK (spell) from a Klamar or a BUAN (sorcerer) who had very wide powers to create havoc and their powers were higher than those of the matándoc. Any likely candidate could inherit the position of Buan with proper aptitudes after a long period of training. Although it could be either male or female, in most cases the choice was a man. The position of BUAN was very high and even the liurais treated them with humble respect and fear. In animist societies, all living things have a soul, be they plants or animals. The evil spirits come from creatures, especially those that spent the first half of their life in water, and from those who led a bad life,” says Morris.

¹⁷ 'East Timor: the continuing betrayal', ed. CIIR (Catholic Institute for International Relations) London, Sep. 96

¹⁸ Cliff Morris: 'A Traveller's Dictionary in Tetun-English and English-Tetun', ed. Baba Dook Books, Frankston, 1992, Australia.

There was another entity with supernatural powers, KUKULUSAK. In its natural form, it appeared as an old woman, but had powers to become any other thing... She could come as a beautiful young woman capable of attracting all innocent people to all sorts of dangers. In each village, there were stories of witches coming and taking away relatives, never to be seen again. Some parents used to tell their children that witches ate children especially those who misbehave...

A variant of that legend is known by its Portuguese eponym, Pontiana, a mixture of woman and bird, during the night chasing pregnant women to extricate from their wombs the foetus she ate. At the same time, using her seductiveness she attracted their husbands to eat their hearts.

Cliff Morris says that according to these animist beliefs *“we are on this earth for a short period and that after death on this earth we would return to the womb of the earth through the many vaginas that exist in the FATU KUAK (caves) in Timor... All tribal debts have to be repaid by our surviving relatives, in order to free the soul and enable a feast to be held to celebrate the spirit’s passage to heaven.”*

III) THE LEGEND OF TIMOR AND THE CROCODILE

All communities have legends on the coming of the first man on earth, to create his clan or tribe. I cannot resist the temptation to transcribe here the legend of the creation of Timor, narrated by the great poet, Fernando Sylvan¹⁹:

“I heard it said that there was once a crocodile who had lived for many hundreds of years in a swamp and whose great dream was to grow and reach a phenomenal size. However, not only was he a small crocodile, he also lived in a very confined place. Only his dream was large.

A swamp, of course, is the worst possible place to live. Shallow, stagnant water hemmed in by strange ill-defined banks, and above all lacking in food to tempt a crocodile.

For all these reasons, the crocodile was sick and tired of the swamp. Nevertheless, he had nowhere else to live.

Over the years – thousands of years, it would seem – it was the crocodile’s love of talking that kept him going. Whenever he was awake, he would talk and talk... he would ask himself questions and then, as if he were somebody else, would answer them.

Even so, when you talk to yourself like this for centuries, you begin to run out of topics of conversation. Not only this, but the crocodile was also getting hungry, first because there weren’t enough fish or other creatures in the swamp to provide him with suitable meals, and second because although there were tasty tender animals to be

¹⁹ Fernando Sylvan, in “Cancioneiro Maubere (Hananuknanoik Maubere)”, ed. Fundação Austronésia Borja da Costa, Lisbon, 1988.

caught, like goats, piglets and dogs, they all lived a long way off.

"I'm sick of living on so little, in a place like this!" he would exclaim in exasperation.

"Be patient, be patient...", replied his imaginary companion.

"But a crocodile cannot live on patience!" he would grumble.

There is, of course, a limit to everything, including resistance to hunger. The crocodile's body grew weak and his spirits sank. His eyes became dull and he could hardly lift his head or open his mouth.

"I must get out of here and look for food further afield..."

With an effort, he climbed the bank and made his way first through the mud and then across the sand. The sun was high in the sky, scorching the ground. There was no refuge anywhere. The crocodile became weaker and weaker until he remained where he was, roasting alive.

At that moment, a lively young lad happened to pass by, humming to himself.

"What is the matter, Crocodile? You are in a bad way! Have you broken your legs? Did something fall on you?"

"No, I have not broken anything. I am all in one piece. It is just that although I am small, I cannot carry my body anymore. I'm too weak even to find a way out of this sweltering heat."

The lad replied, "If that is all it is, I can help you."

Moreover, with that, he went up to the crocodile, picked him up and carried him to the edge of the swamp.

What the lad failed to notice as he carried him, however, was that the crocodile had perked up considerably: his eyes brightened and he opened his mouth and ran his tongue around his saw-like teeth.

"This lad must be tastier than anything I have ever eaten," thought the crocodile, *and imagined stunning the lad with a lash from his tail and then gobbling him up.*

"Do not be so ungrateful," replied the other voice inside him.

"But the need justifies the end."

"That may be, but remember it is also shameful to betray a friend. And this is the first friend you have ever had."

"So you expect me to do nothing, and starve to death?"

"The lad rescued you when you needed him. Now, if you want to survive, it is up to you to look for food."

"That is true..."

Therefore, when the lad placed him on the wet ground, the crocodile smiled, rolled his eyes, shook his tail and said:

"Thank you. You are the first friend I have ever had. I cannot give you anything in return, but if you never been further than this swamp we see all around us and would like one day to travel abroad, to cross the sea, come and see me..."

"I would like that very much because it is my dream to see what lies out there across the sea."

"Dream? Did you say dream? I too have a dream," replied the crocodile."

They went their separate ways, the lad little suspecting that the crocodile had been tempted to eat him. This was just as well.

Time passed, and one day the lad returned. He hardly recognised the crocodile: his burns had disappeared and he looked plump and well fed.

"Listen, Crocodile, my dream has not gone away. I cannot stand it anymore."

"A promise is a promise. I have been finding so much food that I would almost forget my dream. You did well to come and remind me of it, Lad. Do you want to set off right now, across the sea?"

"That is the only thing I want, Crocodile."

"Then me too. So let's be off."

They were both delighted with the arrangement. The lad settled himself on the crocodile's back, as if in a canoe, and they set out to sea.

"It was all so big and so beautiful! What astonished them most was the open space, the size of the vista that stretched away before and above them, endlessly. Day and night, night and day, they never rested. They saw islands big and small, with trees, mountains, and clouds. They could not say which was more beautiful, the days or the nights, the islands or the stars. They went on and on; always following the sun, until the crocodile finally grew tired.

"Listen, Lad. I cannot go on. My dream is over.

"Mine will never be over...."

The lad was still speaking when the crocodile suddenly grew and grew in size until, still keeping his original shape; he turned into an island covered with hills, woods, and rivers.

And that is why Timor is the shape of a crocodile."

In immemorial times, Timor was a society where there was no money and each one's fortune was measured in terms of how much cattle he owned: horses, buffaloes, goats, pigs, as well as gold and silver. Animals were not used for food because they had a much more important use destined for them: in life, they showed how successful someone was, and, in death, they were sacrificed for a ceremonial party to send the soul to the heaven. Animals were NEVER sacrificed as a religious tribute, but as food for the guests. There were parties to commemorate births, where there was always a correct relationship between direct relatives (or by blood) and relatives of the other part (in-laws, etc.)

The majority of marriages was organised for political unions and not for more prosaic reasons such as compatibility between two human beings, such as in love. In a baptism, the invited guests could well have come from another part of the island, another tribe, or clan. These parties and meetings served to cement the obligations that each political alliance

imposed upon each tribe or clan, helping to keep the peace between communities and within them.

During plantation time, there were special ceremonies to placate the ire of the Klamar, and thus making sure that the Klamar guardian knew that seeds were being planted in the womb of Mother Earth. The Klamar could then warrant they were fruitful. If the planting was done with the first rains, and, after that, there was no more rain, it was said that the evil spirits had killed the soul of the plants, instead of blaming the farmer for having planted too early.

During crop time, it was always busy in order to collect everything before the rats ate the yearly crop. Rats obviously were the work of evil spirits. The same was said of plants that had a disease or failed to grow for any reason, such as too much rain.

The house in Timor (UMA) means much more than a mere place to inhabit. Animist religions have no churches or chapels, and the houses have better appeal for religious purposes. A traditional house sits on two poles or foundations, one representing the male, the other, the female. Everything, in Timor, comes in twos. Houses are divided into two parts, and in one of them, the woman is supreme.

Since the house has this religious meaning, the woman is quite often the head of the family (and this happened well before the Indonesian started the extermination of all males, in the 70s and 80s). On the female post hang the bags woven by the women, where the dried placentas of all occupants of the house lie. Those bags must accompany each person throughout their lives. If that does not happen, that person ceases to be protected against the Klamar, and cannot return to Mother Earth as a complete person by the time of death.

All disasters (natural or otherwise) are accepted with a natural fatalism as work of evil spirits. Even accidents are attributed to fetishes or invasion of evil spirits. It has always been like this, and this has allowed the Timorese to withstand all calamities and misfortunes as if nothing abnormal had occurred. This was quite visible in the years following the (Indonesian) invasion and domination.

The importance given to fight the Klamar has led many traditional Timorese to change their names, in order not to let the Klamar know where they are, and nobody is able to dissuade them to return to the old name. This was extremely disconcerting for the Portuguese when they were conducting their biannual Census.

Marriage and especially its preparation is time consuming and ceremonious. The usual method was by HAFOLI (literally: price fixing) where the intermediary (normally the Katuas was chosen by the family) would take, at least one year, to establish all contractual conditions of the alliance. Appropriate offers would be exchanged every time a part of the agreement was reached.

At each stage of this process, a LIA NA'IN²⁰ recited two-line verses (called DADOLIN)²¹ emphasising the alliance with the other part. Another LIA NA'IN from the other side would identically recite verses, whilst the invited guests were digesting what had been offered by the relatives of the bridegroom.

After all the terms of the nuptial alliance have been discussed and agreed, and the initial offerings been transferred from one part to the other (buffaloes, local horses (kudas), gold and silver on the part of the groom; goats, pigs and fabrics on the part of the bride), both youngsters could start living together at night, on the house of the parents of the bride. The only wedding rite was the consummation.

In times, now long gone by, weddings were taken very seriously. Firstly, the future bridegroom asked permission to the parents of the bride to wed. After that, Katuas would decide whether he was a suitable candidate to become a full member of the clan (as practising priest of Mother Earth). Only married men and women could fully take part in all religious rites and secrets of the clan. When the katuas decided a young man was not suitable or convenient they immediately end the preparation for initiation.

Of course, things are no longer like this, because after 1975 every man takes for the bride who he decides, without recourse to the traditional ceremonies or Barlaque. This is called HAFE. Contrary to western civilisation, and as is quite common in eastern civilisations, marriage between first cousins is not frowned upon, if the couple is children of a brother and a sister. Two children of sisters or brothers cannot wed.

Slavery existed until 1975, even if forbidden and denied by the Portuguese authorities. Children of both sexes were sold as ATAN (slaves) to do unpaid work as servants or Kreado (the one who cares for babies) and they were not free to leave the family. Their masters or bosses were responsible for their well-being, and, in general, even during the Portuguese period, especially until World War 2, they were well cared for. In many cases, they became part of the family, and it was normal when reaching adulthood for them to marry the daughter of the boss, whom they cared for when growing up.

East Timorese have special reverence towards death when those who mourn the deceased tell the virtues of the deceased to the world of the living in all detail.

The death of a dear relative, important clan member created a vacuum that had to be quickly filled. This would take long hours of negotiation and debate between the katuas of the clan, trying to find the right person to fill the (dead man's) shoes. Sometimes, there was nobody within the clan capable of filling the vacancy, and it was necessary to get someone from a neighbouring tribe. In extreme situations, the clan could have to split into two.

As for the death and debts of the deceased, a year past his demise, all relatives and creditors, or those who had an alliance

²⁰ Storyteller, poetry narrator from a predetermined narration, improvised and added in each instance. See also DADOLIN.

²¹ Dadolin: two line poetry, whereas each line starts with the final verse of the previous line, and so on, without a predetermined ending. One can always add more verses according to the circumstances and predisposition of the narrator.

with the deceased were invited to a Kore Metan (celebration of departure) where the soul of the departed has emerged from Mother Earth. Many of the debts were paid by the mere preparation of the feast. Guests filled themselves with all good food and TUAKA (palm wine). These feasts lasted a week of dances and telling stories of the virtues of the departed.

IV) DIALECTS

Dialects and sub-dialects number about 32, of which the most important and widely spoken is Tetum, very simple in its primitive grammar, with all verbs used in the infinitive, and a very small vocabulary which is somewhat enriched by Portuguese neologisms.

Tetum is the traditional Malay Polynesian language implanted after the 14th century and convenes enough to encompass all daily life. It is only in 1963, that some Christian missionaries convert Tetum into a written form. South coast is from the Polynesian stock origin, but the peoples from the Northeast are Melanesians. The Belu kingdom encompassed almost the entire island, decreasing its importance after the arrival of the Portuguese.

Although some sources are contradictory, the other dialects by order of numeric importance and the villages and towns where they were spoken are:

The Kémak (Bobonaro), the Bunác or Bunak (Bobonaro), the Macassae or Makasae (Ossú, Laga), the Tocodede or Tukudedde (Liquiçá, Maubara, Tilomar, Viqueque), the Mambai or Mambae (Ailéu, Ainaro), the Galole (Manatuto, Lacló, Laleia), the Lacalei, the Vai-Maha or Vaimo'a (Baucau and Atambua), the Midiquí or Midiki (Baguia and Luca), the Bagadé or Dagada (Lautém), the Nauéte or Na'ueté (Uato Carabau, Remexio), the Naumác, the Socolori, the Sabane, the Idaté (Lacluba), Nogo Nogo (Cailaco, Atabai, Suai, Samoro) and the Cairui.

Some of these are only small variations of the Atoni - the language spoken before the Tetum or Belu (Belos) people invaded the island six centuries ago. The official language until 1976 is Portuguese, being later replaced by the language of the Javanese invader.

Although Tetum is understood in all regions of Timor, there is a wide variation in pronunciation and vocabulary, provoked by the influence other dialects exert in their own areas. Even in areas where Tetum is the only mother tongue, there are variations and distinct sub-dialects. The name of the **Tetum** language must be written as **Tetum** (Tétun) because its phonetic sound corresponds to **N** and not **M**, although the Portuguese have adopted **M** because in this language there is no differentiation in the final sounding of that consonant. In Tétun, no word ends in **M**.

Cliff Morris, the person who has studied most the languages of East Timor, was there in 1942 with the Australian Army and returned in 1973 when he discovered what happened to those Timorese who helped him during the war. It was then that he decided to dedicate the rest of his days to study and divulge Tetun, having published, ten years later, a 10 000-word dictionary of English. Tetun and Tetun English published in 1984 by ANU (Australian National University) with the help of Paulo Quintão da Costa.

According to that author, one needs about 1 100 words to establish communication in the Timorese idiom. Morris divides Tetun into four principal dialects:

- **TETUN LOS** centred in Soibada and in the Kingdom of Samoro, and throughout the entire coast between Alas (west) and Luka (east),
- **TETUN TERIK**, spoken in the north-western part of East Timor and north-eastern part of West Timor, being a dialect closely linked to TETUN BELU,
- **TETUN BELU**, spoken on the southwestern part of East Timor and south-eastern of West Timor. Both this dialect and TETUN TERIK are considered distinct from TETUN LOS because there are wide variations for individual words, although grammar and syntax are synonymous,
- **TETUN DILI** or **TETUN PRASA (PRAÇA)** is the dialect taught to the Portuguese and other foreigners needing a common language to trade. It is simpler in grammatical terms and was considered *lingua franca* during the Portuguese era, although Bahasa is replacing it today.

5. SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ETHNIC AND HISTORICAL STRATIFICATION

1) FIRST INHABITANTS

The aboriginal inhabitants of the island are probably the Atoni invaded by the Tetun or Belu (Belos) people from Malacca in the 14th century. Throughout the centuries, the miscegenation with other Papuan, Malay, Melanesian/Polynesian and European peoples creates a large variety of anthropomorphic features. The multiplicity of ethnic groups derives from Melanesian and Malaysian stock.

Intermarriage between people of different tribes and background is often a means of establishing continuity for some local kingdoms, thus the very wide miscegenation that occurs. The main ethnic groups - apart from the Timorese - are (until 1975) the Portuguese, Indian, Muslim (also known as Arabs) and the Chinese.

The Portuguese, well-known by everything that concerned women, do not have a very strong influence in creating a Creole group in Timor, as they did in Brazil. This was due because of the reduced numbers of Europeans occupying this far-flung colony until the early 18th century. Only this century, a new Creole group is established and their influence in general terms confined to the administrative cadres (until 1975) and to the resistance cadres overseas after that date.

The homogeneity of the Timorese people although not real is felt more through external manifestations of unity (mostly based upon the adoration of the Portuguese flag²²), than through any national solidarity or nationalism. Do not mistake these notions with others on nationalism, current after 1975 or with notions of Portuguesism, as did Almeida Santos

²² All types of the Portuguese flag were treated almost like "lulic" (sacred symbols throughout the East Timor history).

when he came here representing the National Salvation Junta in 1974...

The ethnic diversity is more or less '*melanic*' since the official Portuguese designation of 'oceanic' might induce in error. More than a real hegemony, important is the feeling, and that exists, of being one only people. Nationalism always existed, many times showing up more as tribalism than a real feeling of national unity. This would pop up after 1975 in all its strength.

Apart from such symptoms, the interregional peculiarities and hostilities were always been particularly noticeable and sometimes even predominant.

Timor keeps well alive until the mid-50s the recent tradition of warring tribes, on which so much of its cultural values relies upon. The ethno-political instability shows an incredibly high number of allegiances, permanently challenged, and switched on to the interests of the day.

The kings through their various titles: chieftain Régulos, Liurais, Heads of Suco²³ throughout the centuries organise a web of wars, marriage alliances and other primaeval interests subsequently perpetuated, thus creating a mythological culture common to all tribes.

II) CHINESE POPULATION

The Chinese only settle in significant numbers in East Timor during this century, although, in the past, they were the first foreign merchants, always leaving a small minority implanted in the island. Their languages are mainly Mandarin, Hakka and Cantonese or dialects of these. Their origin is uncertain, although many come from Taiwan (Formosa), Hainan, and more recently from Indonesia (after the 1965 Revolution).

As a community, traditionally hermetic and homogenised, keeping their schools and temples, the Chinese do not assimilate or integrate with other cultures but for sheer necessity. In Timor, they learn the local dialects, so that they can trade, and to benefit from (the Portuguese) administration deals, they speak very basic Portuguese. Most Chinese have already obtained a Portuguese passport by 1973, although many keep their double citizenship. They seem not to lose their links with the motherland, since most of their children after finishing the primary studies are sent to Taiwan, to continue with their secondary school studies.

It might seem odd but I have never met any Chinese who ever admitted having come from mainland China (The People's Republic of China), but with so many killed and maimed during the Indonesian Revolution, it is probably safer to keep quiet. Being born in the P. R. of China was equivalent to being a communist, and for some people that is anathema.

²³ The Régulos were kings of a shire/district/province, seconded down the line by Liurais as heads of district, and by Heads of Suco/Souk in the smaller villages.

It should be noted, at this point, that the Chinese community is viewed with disdain and distrust, sometimes, even hostility by many Timorese. This was mainly due to their privileged economic status, obtained in a very short time-span. As a commercial entity, the Chinese manipulate all the imports and the exports, exporting their savings as well, thus withdrawing from the internal money markets the most needed commodity of Timor: money.

All forms of hostility create insecurity that in turn provokes fear for the future and forces people to organise escape routes for the days to come, maintaining the self-perpetuating cycle of making money, to save and export for a future home abroad.

Although they are hostile towards the Chinese, the Timorese will not confront them directly. There were never acts of plundering, firebombing and ill-treatment like those that frequently happen in other Indonesian islands.

The Timorese whinge, but simultaneously recognise their co-dependency, accepting as an escape valve, all chances of promoting the inter-marriage between the two communities. This new mixture starts almost immediately after the Indonesian Revolution of 1965 when some Chinese refugees from Indonesia saw marriage as a legitimising option for their permanency in East Timor.

When the events come to force an escape away from Timor, they are much better prepared to face a new start in a different country, than anyone else is. They have by then, enough funds stashed away to start afresh.

The Timorese faced the consumer society, to which they are only recently introduced for better enjoying the day-to-day needs. The Chinese subordinate present considerations to the future and provide means to solve future needs.

This generalisation of the Chinese community, as then seen by the Timorese, although it may seem simplistic enough and adjusted to the prejudices of many of us, is nevertheless not correct. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Chinese community in Timor is poor. Many of them are only employees underpaid by their kin; others are nurses, public servants, drivers, carpenters, or mere agriculturists. A small number even inter-married local people, thus severing many umbilical links with the Chinese community as a whole.

As Dr J. Pestana Bastos, a psychologist with the Portuguese Armed Forces wrote in 1974, *"this defence of the rights of the minorities is nuclear for the conceptualising of democracy."*

Speaking of minorities, they tend to become majorities in East Timor, traditionally undernourished, with a very low-level of sanitary standards and mostly illiterate. Disease, hunger, poverty and a certain abnegation, or shall we call it 'abulia'; can easily be described as the best fitting adjectives for the Timorese people.

III) MUSLIMS

The Islamic community centred at Dili and numbering roughly 500 souls, is another very distinctive group, extremely hermetic in what concerns marriage, belongs to the Chaffi Sect (Shafiiyah ²⁴) and descends from ancient merchants from Surabaya (in Java Is.) and Makassar. Established in Dili until the Second World War as traders of clothing and fabrics, after the War are forced to seek other forms of employment as artisans, farmers, fishermen and public servants. Between them, they spoke Bahasa Malay, although most can express themselves in Tetum and in a somewhat restricted Portuguese. They always practised the Islamic cult in a small mosque in Dili, where they also run a school and maintain their Arabic names, although sometimes adulterated.

IV) TIMORESE GROUPS

The Timorese can be subdivided into four main groups:

- a) The ones depending on traditional hierarchic structures;
- b) the coastal people;
- c) the miscegenated; and
- d) the students.

a) The traditional hierarchy group

A hereditary double base supports those who depend on traditional hierarchic structures: by blood and by surname. Their land is traditionally divided into different kingdoms whose warriors perpetuate the links and bonds, between land, King, and serfs.

Although coming from traditional warring backgrounds, they are limited, since the end of the Second World War, by the Portuguese Administration concepts of parallel noble hierarchies as practised in the African colonies, whereby the kings are nominated more on a basis of friendliness towards the coloniser, than by their noble and royal blood ascendancy.

The local nobility and royalty are subdivided into three distinct levels:

1. The first - was descendant by blood (in a similar way to the European Monarchies);
2. The second - was descendant by means of land (inheritance by land ownership) and,
3. The third - was by the sword (military feats, notable conquests, or heroic achievements against the enemies of the King or the kingdom).

Since the tribal wars are no longer common, or extremely limited to what one might be tempted to call a family affair, a

²⁴ Chaffi, Shafiiyah, also known as Shafi'i tes or Madh hab Shafi'i. A Sunni school of Islamic Law, derived from the teachings of A'Abd Allah ash-Shafi'i (767 - 820 AD). This school stabilised the bases of Islamic legal theory, admitting the validity of both divine will and human speculation. It argues for the unquestionable acceptance of Hadith (traditions concerning the life and utterances of the Prophet) as the major basis for legal and religious judgements and the use of analogical reasoning (Q'iyas) when no clear directive can be found in the Quran (Koran) or Hadith.

certain void arises. The Portuguese Administration ingeniously fills by creating the so-called “*Troops of the 2nd Line.*” It is an almost parallel army organisation, entirely manned by local people, with a separate uniform but with the same ranks of a normal army (although the rates of pay are in essence substantially high in comparison with the average per capita income of the Timorese).

These troops operate with more power than a normal militia force and embody the Portuguese presence in inhospitable outposts. Furthermore, they command plenty of respect from the population since they are the utmost representatives of the Portuguese and have attached to their names a very substantive army rank. They control supplies and their equitable distribution, wielding a highly visible power. For most of them, this is extremely honourable, apart from providing them with a real economic or socioeconomic promotion.

b) The coastal people

For the second group of Timorese: the coastal people, the most archaic and traditional links of land, King and sword, are meaningless. They organise themselves in a nuclear structure, almost equalitarian, where all depend on the fruits of the sea for survival. Along similar lines to that of traditional Australian Aborigines, these coastal people have in sharing a major conceptual notion of their social structure.

Following a structure identical to that of the Australian Aborigines, these coastal people had in sharing their main conceptual notion of social structure. Trade with other Timorese groups is reduced to a trickle, after all, subsistence needs have been provided for. They are probably descendants of nomadic seafarers who become sedentary. Unfortunately, not much is known of these people, and most researchers do not even mention them as a separate entity. Easy to accommodate, they usually avoid mingling or inter-marrying and have not much clout in most fields of life in East Timor.

c) The miscegenated

The most common origin of the Creole or miscegenated Timorese is between a European male and a Timorese female (“Bi Bére, Bui Bére or Bére-Bi”). It is curious to remark, though, that according to traditional Timorese concepts, the legal or judicial rights involved are different whether the descendant is from the mother - “*fétossan*” - or from the father - “*umane*.” In a patriarchal society, it is not, hard to imagine that descendant via the father is considered ‘superior’ to the one via the mother!

This third group exists as a separate entity, their main activity is farming or as low and middle-rank clerks in the Public Service. Compared to the average Timorese, these are already highly competent in terms of technical and professional qualifications.

It is expected of them to become a buffer, between the predominant Portuguese and other Timorese, creating an intermediate class, equivalent in non-colonial societies to a middle-class. Their promotional prospects are very limited in

terms of the size of the Portuguese colonial administration. Politically, they tend either to side more with the Portuguese than with their kinship, creating various social and economic pressures, which in the past provoke their tendency to migrate to Portugal or to Australia.

d) The students

The fourth group although a transient one has to be considered as pertaining to the woven social fabric of the Timorese society. They tend to belong to the higher strata of locally born people, and immediately after graduating from high school, they encounter a saturated labour market. The options in 1974 are migrating - restricted to most - or, settling down as a new elite of suburban educated unemployed.

The Portuguese educational system in Timor is indeed fraudulent since it raises extremely high expectations of sociocultural promotion, which are not to be fulfilled afterwards. With access to new positions in the bureaucracy restricted and very much stable, and a private sector almost non-existent in terms of service occupations, often this creates very strong pressures on the educated Timorese females to chase all available Portuguese Europeans, seeking in the marriage a way out, an escape route to perpetual unemployment.

V) THE EUROPEANS

Just another minority? Indeed, representing almost barely 0.2% of the population of Timor, the Europeans are totally distinct and separate from other groups and detain until 1975 all means of power as the colonisers. Although racial feelings against this group are minimal, there is in terms of socioeconomic factors a very lively opposition.

The main problem with the vast majority of these European Portuguese is that they come to East Timor only for a stint of two years on a military commission or a military conscription basis. They number by the end of 1974, about 2,500 men and 500 women, most of them as corporals, privates, and sergeants with only one hundred or so officers.

These Europeans can be sub-grouped into two major distinct entities: the career officers and sergeants, and the conscripted personnel, but overall, some traits are common to both. Those common traits are:

- i) The paternalism of colonial connotations and its psycho-social activities towards the local people;*
- ii) The excessive protectionism applied to the Timorese as a guilt complex, or just an excuse because they are Timorese;*
- iii) The mutual lack of understanding intertwined with feelings of xenophobia and cultural isolation;*
- iv) The technical and economic superiority of the Europeans mistakenly considered as cultural predominance;*
- v) The very high purchasing power of the military as an inflationary factor in the progressive pauperism of the local people;*

- vi) *The heavy contribution for labour market saturation, by the unethical accumulation of parallel jobs by the military and their wives (as teachers in Technical Colleges and High Schools, as expert advisers and consultants in other Public Service fields, etc.);***
- vii) *The unnatural imbalance of sexes, with a very heavy supremacy of European males, creating social and sexual tensions and pressures with the local population;***
- viii) *The lack of rationale for so many military staff to attend local security matters, and the lack of military personnel in sufficient numbers to deflect external threats to the territory.***

Other Portuguese residents include Europeans and Africans, in high administrative or bureaucratic positions. If they were, beyond any reasonable doubt extremely competent or unquestionably needed, they might have been better accepted. As it turns out to be, until 1975, they only aggravate the resentment of the educated Timorese and make them feel a cultural minority in a colonial context.

Cape-Verdeans and Indians, although still Portuguese by nationality and numerically irrelevant, feel themselves as superior to the locals, creating a strong (mini) "caste." They insert themselves in the colonised elites - well accepted - and exert a certain ascendancy over the Timorese that makes them akin to the colonisers, perpetuating the gap between different ethnic groups. They are what someone called "a very destabilising minority."

The population growth is extremely high and keeps increasing. Couples with ten or more kids are the norm, unaffected by chronic malaria (here called malaria (paludism)), endemic tuberculosis, generalised cases of gonorrhoea, leprosy, and a very high rate of birth mortality. An eternal flagellation, some might have said, using the moral description as "a scourging, specifically as an incitement of abnormal sexual need."²⁵

Others might say that the great Josué de Castro might have considerably expanded his knowledge of human degradation due to social and economic factors, had he only lived in East Timor.

Josué de Castro, born in Recife, Brazil, is the author of "The Crab cycle," a very controversial anthropologist whom first stated that the crabs feed themselves on peoples' excrement and that men feed themselves exclusively on crabs, thus explaining the total misery of different indigenous people.

East Timor has in those days, more than 600,000 people, poor, sick, undernourished, suffering diseases and a very high rate of birth mortality. They are adept at reproducing themselves without realising that each extra mouth means few grains of rice per head. The children, for the Timorese, represent a sort of Social Security, as an aim that is looked for and not subordination to mere sex. Children, in fact, are born in the midst of very affectionate environment.

²⁵ Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, Encyclopaedic Edition, page 480, 1982 edition.

According to Dr Pestana Bastos in his work "Timor: Portugal and the future":

"THE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TIMOR, AS WELL AS THE SECONDARY, HAS BEEN A MERE FACTORY OF DIPLOMAS THAT CANNOT PROVIDE FOR JOBS. IT IS EASY TO ATTRIBUTE THIS MAJESTIC FAILURE TO THE DICTATORSHIP REGIME, MAYBE EVEN JUSTIFIED, BUT IT IS NOT DEFINITELY JUSTIFIED. THE PROBLEM IS MAINLY POLITICAL AND ONLY INDIRECTLY CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO ECONOMIC FACTORS. FIRST, WE NEED A MOTIVATION, THEN PROMOTION WILL BE FORTHCOMING AND ONLY AFTER THAT CAN WE EXPECT GOODS AND SERVICES."

CHAPTER II – THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT (IN EAST TIMOR)

1. GOVERNORS AND GOVERNED.

To who has lived in Timor, therein dreamed and to those who have met the most abandoned colony of the majestic Empire of Portugal, the mere notion of independence - if only economic - is like looking for the Holy Grail. In fact, until well after the incidents in 1975, East Timor is absolutely insufficient in all economic aspects. Timor cannot provide for its own needs and is no more than a primitive albeit complex society, living in a mini-consumer atmosphere. All the structural bonds are amiss.

Is it incoherent or only a pale reflex of the needs of a certain minority group, totally oblivious to the needs of more than 600,000 souls? Left abandoned for centuries, the colony will only start suffering from colonialist ambitions in the last century. For centuries unexplored, unperturbed by its unsubmissive primaevial costumes, but “not pacified” by its colonial governors, East Timor depends almost absolutely upon Portugal to survive. All structural errors of its administration carry a heavy weight on its development.

Dili, grounded during World War II and totally reconstructed in European moulds grows upon its inverted pyramid vortex, incapable of subsisting. It is only after 1959 that the Portuguese presence in the island starts to expand. Shortly after the 1959 rebellion, the colonial authorities expand the contingent of troops up to 2,500 soldiers, a number kept until 1975.

Is it a tardy attitude, an imperialistic “boutade,” or merely a way of preserving an imperialistic façade for the Indonesians to see? For the military stationed in Timor, the situation is closely similar to Goa, Daman, Diu and [Dadra *Nagar Haveli*] Nagar-a-vely (at the end of the Portuguese rule in India in 1961). The equipment is not sufficient for defence purposes, the headquarters and other military installations are totally indefensible due to their localisation on totally exposed valleys. There were those who were afraid of a repeat of Goa (1961).

Being a newcomer, I cannot understand the lack of facilities in terms of defensive power. All military installations and headquarters are wide open to enemy attack and lack proper artillery.

One might be excused if thinking that the prevailing attitude is that we were living in Portugal, were one faces no external threats at all, but here we are in Portuguese Timor, just next to Indonesia, a very dangerous neighbour, and all our barracks are sitting ducks. Fortunately, I am only a conscripted army officer in the Supply Battalion and not a professional Army man, otherwise, I might have been frightened. However, being also a journalist in those days is a very scary occupation.

Without any proper research, being done in those days one can sense the anti-Indonesian feelings are rampant, and with

the Portuguese administration debilitated, no reassurance is forthcoming.

Local power is under the limited attributes of a simple Governor (not even a Governor-General.) He is dependent on a central power established in Lisbon and supported by a provincial consultative and a legislative assembly. These are the so-called representative organic (or statutory) entities. Their representativeness in terms of the electorate is nil: 11 of the 21 representatives are nominated by the Governor, the other 10 selected by the administrative and collective bodies that represent the mainstream of commercial and industrial activity in the territory. The Consultative Assembly has 12 members, of which four are appointed by the Governor, the other eight picked (i.e., nominated) by the other administrative bodies.

One cannot expect from these 'elected' officials more than a rubber stamp legislation, they are there, only to perpetuate the status quo. With local administration divided into shires, districts, boroughs, municipalities, and localities, most of the time the promotion of one village to a superior classification depends upon political allegiances alone of their chief to the provincial powers.

The main link between the Portuguese administration and the masses is done through the "Régulo" and/or the Civil Administrator. Do not forget that before World War II, the "Régulo" is omnipotent and everybody depends on him. To perpetuate in the native population the cult for the omnipotent authority of the "Régulo" is a way of legitimising the Portuguese administration after the War. Those "Régulos" are imposed upon the natives without a proper royal base (but with a strong loyalty towards Portugal).

If we compare them to the artificially imposed "2nd Line troops," it is not hard to see how the legitimising is a "de facto" situation. One cannot avoid noticing, how ingeniously the administration captivates the goodwill and dedication of the Timorese, through this scheme. On one hand, it keeps them occupied, on the other beneath a certain degree of responsibility it offers them above average purchasing power. Using the very traditional methods of accepting the sacred hierarchy, they are being led and mobilised.

The Timorese have to do tasks that the European Portuguese are not willing to: opening bush tracks, building military outposts in rugged border areas, maintaining mountain tracks, manning totally isolated and dangerous border watchpoints. The reward is merely symbolic, while a European Army Lieutenant or second Lieutenant earns AUD\$ 550.00 tax-free per month, a 2nd Line Lieutenant will earn \$15.00 tax-free. The average monthly salary is then, well below \$10.00 per capita for local people, although in the main cities, like Dili and Baucau, a house person makes up to \$20.00 monthly with accommodation provided. This, of course, is a mere exception with few privileged enough to make that much money.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY AND ELITE REALIGNMENT

At the very apex of the institutional hierarchy, we have a direct representative of the colonising power. The Governor, as plenipotentiary mandatory, is only limited by the politico-administrative orientation of the colonising State. As its

executor, he controls and commands a restrict politico-administrative Politburo, nominating and replacing by trustworthy and faithful followers all Heads of Department for the perpetuation of the basic principles of colonialism.

In this pyramidal structure, it is foreseen and accepted that at its base, some native workforce can be employed, if properly guided and indoctrinated by its immediate hierarchic superiors.

Such local element will occupy the lowest possible positions in the administration, saving considerable financial resources that otherwise will have to be spent bringing in people from Portugal. At this level, it is proven that mainland Portuguese have the tendency to smarten up very quickly, out of their natural ambience, becoming sometimes an obstacle to a very linear unhampered chain of command.

The smallest portion of the action is thus left to the colonised. Then, in a very pervasive way, the coloniser is degrading and reformulating the original socioeconomic structure of the colonised. The subsequent emulation, provoked by a strong need to be socially promoted within the ranks of the coloniser, is the touchstone for the colonising power to promote the absorption and assimilation of its values, by the natives.

The initial elites, based on ancestral values are giving way to new ones, based on the value of money and social position within the administrative ranks. The new elites consider themselves superior to the older ones; tend to disregard these and consequently their traditional values. This self-perpetuating cycle provides for these new social upper castes to keep oppressed the other local groups, embodying the heinous part of the colonialist: the lack of concern or respect for the established native structures and values. A totally centralised system, like this, where all the legislative, executive and judiciary powers allow no concessions to other cultures, in fact, create a virtual monopoly of culture, science, economy and technology.

The European Portuguese, in such an alienating system, hamper any possibility of restructuring or introducing outside values. The military, as guarantor of the institutionalised hierarchy, acts in parallel to it. The Army of about 2,500 men, scattered by different points of the territory in very precarious conditions, has no vocation to interact in material and spiritual situations. Isolated and insulated as it is, its troops are permanently facing an almost catatonic state, with a very deep lack of motivation in intellectual and political terms. The Army lacks any goal in Timor. In addition, in the Army, we witness the local recruitment at private and corporal ranks of natives.

Consistent with the very poor standards of living of the Timorese, who can blame them for joining the Army to get better food, proper clothing and housing, and on top of it all, better pay? They do not even notice how fast they become just other incipient elite. Divided between contradictory allegiances, the Timorese watch without fully understanding, its own community shattered by the creation of artificial new social and economic conditions.

In such hyper-heterogeneous societies, the process used by the coloniser is to transfer - at least apparently - the exploitative role of the exploited. Such transfer creates a human and moral support to the oppressor, even if at the cost

of renewing pressures and ancestral social tensions.

These newly-formed elitist groups start losing their bonds with their ancestral characteristics and slowly adapt the ones pertaining to their coloniser. As António Rola, writes in his book "To Think Timor, Today":

"Ideologically conquered such elites, the binomial dialectic: EXPLOITATION + OPPRESSION & SUBJUGATED POVERTY + REVOLT are fallaciously deactivated."

"Summarily, we can analyse the social structure of Timor:

1. *A SYSTEMATIC DEGRADING AND DEFILING OF THE PARA-JUDICIAL CONSUECUDINARY RELATIONS, WHICH SUPPORTS IT;*
2. *THE DISSOLUTION OF THE JUDICIARY POLITICAL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES, DUE TO THE SUPERIMPOSITION OF NORMS AND RULES INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES THAT MAINTAIN THEM;*
3. *THE EXTERNAL IMPOSITION OF LEGAL NORMS ORIGINATED IN A FOREIGN AND ALIEN CULTURE;*
4. *THE DRASTIC CREATION AND IMPLANTATION OF NEW SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, ALTOGETHER WITH NEW ELITES, REJECTING THE TRADITIONAL SOCIOECONOMIC BASIC FABRIC OF THE TIMORESE SOCIETY, TO PRESERVE THE COLONIAL EXPLOITATION.*

These premises lead to:

1. *A TOTAL PHASING OUT AND DISSOCIATION OF THE INDIVIDUALS IN RELATION TO THE INSTITUTIONS (WHETHER TRADITIONAL OR COLONIAL);*
2. *AN ALIENATING PROCESS WHEREAS THEY BECOME NON-PERSONALISED, UNABLE TO PROMOTE A RATIONAL AND COLLECTIVE ANSWER (IF NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ONE) TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE. INERTIA AND APATHY CHARACTERISE THIS STAGE;*
3. *THE CONTINUOUS AND STEEP WITHDRAWAL OF THE NEW GENERATIONS FROM THE HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL VALUES THAT SUSTAIN THE TIMORESE CIVILISATION AND A LACK OF LEGITIMACY OF THE ESTABLISHED TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY (RÉGULOS, LIURAS, ETC.)".*

All the rupture points exist at this stage. Timor needs only a catalyst to provoke the chemical reaction that will change the "New Order," such can either be a change in Portugal's colonial rule, a Timorese uprising like the 1959 Uato-Lari rebellion or some international event.

CHAPTER III – THE POWDER KEG (A diary of events)

1. RETROSPECTIVE: ONE YEAR BEFORE THE REVOLUTION. 1973 month by month

1. JANUARY

The year starts with a plague of locusts and lizards in Oé-cusse, immediately followed by huge flooding that destroys roads, communication poles, houses, and surprisingly the newly opened concrete bridge “Alberty Correia” at Manatuto, on the Highway #1 Baucau - Dili. The only positive note of these first two months is the inauguration of the radiotelephonic circuit Dili - Lisbon, operated by Marconi. Timor is at last in communication with the rest of the world, or to say the least in touch with the colonial capital Lisbon.

2. MARCH

March invades Dili and its airport with torrential rains. The food crisis escalates dramatically, with shortages of various staples, and the Government imposes subsidised prices for some items: rice, cooking oil, potatoes, beans, etc. A Commission of Inquiry into the total collapse of the newly built Manatuto bridge is appointed (the results never to be published, leading to allegations of graft and corruption).

3. APRIL

In **April**, Timor watches the new leader of ANP (the only political party with legal existence in Portugal, and the one in power since the beginning of the Salazar dictatorship in 1928) take office as Provincial Secretary. The appointee, Dr Félix Correia, an influential political power broker is also the Head of the Education Department, and his colonialist ideals will be put into action soon after.

4. MAY I

May witnesses a new typical Timorese mystery²⁶, when the ship Arbirú leaves Dili on the 28th on its way to Hong Kong, Macao and Bangkok and suddenly vanishes from the seas without a trace. With international cooperation, the navies of Indonesia, Philippines, and Malaysia to no avail conduct intensive searches. Weeks later, a lone survivor is found under unbelievable circumstances. How he survived on the high seas, infested with sharks and without food, will remain a mystery. After landing at Dili, he describes in implausible detail all his experiences, leaving more questions to be asked than the answers he provides. Conjectures raised only deserve a vague official statement. The ship, although normally used for cargo, was carrying at the time, about twenty civil passengers, mostly wives of army officers and women of the

²⁶ Back in 1961 yet another of Timorese mysteries: a brand new plane after a couple of inaugural flights between Dili and Darwin vanished without trace.

local hi-society. After questioning, the survivor is quickly taken to Lisbon, for further inquiries, and I ignore if he ever returned to Timor. Two years later, there are rumours that some widowers were receiving secret messages from the disappeared wives, but none of those was willing to discuss it or even, speculate about the subject. Another taboo!

5. MAY II

In addition, during May the new Head of the Department of Economy, Dr Henrique Chagas de Jesus is inaugurated to what will soon become the most inflation-ridden chapter of the Timorese economy. Spiralling costs provoke generalised alarm, and in the midst of the crisis, the absolute incompetence of Dr Jesus is compounded with additional dosages of improvised measures. Rice rots in the Suai area (South Coast) and emergency shipments are brought in from Singapore and Australia at prices ten times higher.

6. JUNE

During this eventful year, **June** sees another chapter in the slow expansion of the links of Timor with the outside world. Indonesia authorises the Portuguese Government to start using the local Timorese airline 'TAT' ("Transportes Aéreos de Timor") to fly biweekly between Dili and Kupang (capital of Indonesian Timor). The first two planes used are Hawker Siddeley, twin-engine eight-seaters. The telecommunication's link expands that month, with direct access via radiotelephone to Taipei (Formosa/Taiwan), Australia and Kupang (West Timor).

7. JULY

July and another top executive position is filled, when the then Major Maggiolo Gouveia takes his post as Head Commissioner of the P.S.P. (Civil Police Force). Later he will be in focus during the civil war. A new patrol boat pompously called "Launch Tibar" is commissioned into the calm waters of the Wetar Banda Sea. Unfortunately, since it takes on much water on the inaugural voyage it is destined to be on dry-docking more often than on the sea.

The leader of the ANP - himself a Member of Parliament - starts his political campaigning with a massive mobilisation of the masses. He supports the overseas' policies of Dr Marcello Caetano, the then Prime Minister of Portugal. The Timorese take part with hundreds of people, representatives of each local Régulo, Liurai and Head of Suco, parading through the streets of Dili, with the traditional "Residents' Companies." These are groups of about 50 people, headed by a senior respectable leader of each village (Katuas), who has the honour of being the flag bearer. It is on occasions like these that the elders seek to show, publicly, their respect towards the flag. They use all possible banners, from the white and blue ones of the last dynastic King D. Manuel II of Portugal (deposed in 1910) to the Republican red and green ones. Any call for their presence, under the name of Portugal, provokes some public manifestations that most people consider "patriotic." However, others consider them just animistic representations of idolatry towards the flag. For the local politicians these public demonstrations are profusely photographed (there was no video then), recorded ('Super 8'), and sent back to Lisbon, where they become living proof of the massive "Portuguesism" of the natives.

8. AUGUST

In **August** the 1st Oceanic Regatta Darwin - Dili is held with more than 20 sailing boats. This nautical event coincides with a pilgrimage of Australian ex-servicemen to the "Dare Memorial."

A sober monument to the exploits of the Anzac's during the Japanese occupation of East Timor, the "Dare Memorial" is about half an hour from Dili, on the highest hill, where one can watch the majestically beautiful Dili Bay and a few of the surrounding islands. According to the local legend, the Anzac has used it as a vital watch redoubt.

9. SEPTEMBER

September fades away into oblivion without the establishment of regular air links between Lisbon and Dili. These flights earmarked for the national airline "Transportes Aéreos de Portugal (TAP)" the state-monopoly air carrier never takes place.

10. OCTOBER

In **October**, another top position is filled. The Naval Defence Commandant is Lieutenant-Commander Leiria Pinto (a rank equivalent in the Army to a Lieutenant colonel, below the rank of Commander) the new man in charge of a non-existent Navy. During this month two new, MP's are elected to the Portuguese National Assembly, representing Timor: general Themudo Barata and Mário Viegas Carrascalão. The first is a career politician, who once served in Timor, the latter a native agronomist with a Portuguese degree in Agricultural Engineering, and high expectations of becoming a power broker.

11. NOVEMBER

During the first session of the new National Assembly (Parliament) held in Lisbon by mid-November, the new MP's for Timor propose a sour note, the imposition of harsh rationing on petrol consumption. The few private owners of vehicles have an allowance to buy 4 ½ litres (approx. a gallon) of petrol a week. The military on the other hand lack any restrictions due to their better management of recourses.

2. 1974 - A NEW ERA

1. JANUARY - *The enfant terrible.*

José Ramos Horta praises the new literacy rate of 80% announced by Dr Félix Correia, Head of the Provincial Department of Education. Horta expresses his belief that all Timorese children have to be able to read and write, otherwise, there is no significance in the Portuguese presence in Timor. Ramos Horta, later a FRETILIN Revolutionary leader, was then a local Private doing his army time in the newsroom of the local newspaper "A Voz de Timor."

A self-made man, thanks to a strenuous effort of political and cultural assimilation, Horta is at this time, known as a local *“enfant terrible”* that decides to assault the sentry on duty at the Army Headquarters. When interrogated, he defends himself by stating that he only wants to prove how inefficient are the military security and defence structures.

This remarkable understatement gives Horta a good amount of publicity. He is neither punished for his high treason act nor court-martialled. Some people publicly condemn his irresponsibility and wonder about his immunity. The Governor, Colonel Alves Aldeia, regularly gave incentive to local youngsters to reassert themselves.

By the end of January, the Governor proposes to the Central Government in Lisbon, that Dili should be converted into a duty-free port, to solve some structural problems of the local economy. Far from being a novel idea, the Portuguese Executive never considered it feasible, somewhat fearful that the external influences of a duty-free zone might corrode and corrupt the moral values of the local society. A more typical example of colonial paternalism would be hard to find.

The author of such a non-original idea was a very active Army Officer, who served in Timor during the 60s and who wanted to emulate the successes of Hong Kong and Singapore, to develop Timor. The main reason for the floundering of the proposal is nothing but lack of interest in investing the huge amounts of money to equip the colony with the much-needed infrastructures.

The Governor says:

“The 40% hike in the cost of petrol and electricity,” powered in Dili by guzzling Diesel generators, with its escalating inflationary effects in foodstuff prices is but the “result of international market forces, from which Timor cannot escape.”

Alves Aldeia then adds, half in grievance, half in sorrow:

“It is proclaimed that the Timorese people are warriors, inclined to arms, but nobody is willing to follow the military career even if very rewarding for some.”

A few years later, a career in arms would become but a way of life.

Meanwhile, in a long-awaited gesture of recognition, the authorities in Lisbon, award as Knight of the Order of the Portuguese Empire the Maubara Régulo, Dom Gaspar Nunes, a much-heralded hero of the Second World War.

In Dili, an unheard of a strike at the “Galódromo Municipal de Dili” (Cockfighting Stadium) marks popular discontent to a new tax on cockfights. Ramos Horta writes: *“Cockfighting is an acquired habit deeply entrenched in the personality and culture of the Timorese people, always portrayed with a ‘catena’ (cutlass) and holding a fighting cock under the arm.”*

2. FEBRUARY: HORTA STRIKES AGAIN

With the brouhaha typical of big events in small places, Sir Leslie Thiess and Don Gills arrive in Timor. These Australian millionaires want to invest 16 million dollars in three hotels, with a combined capacity of 400 beds. The chain will have a Hotel in Dili (170 beds), another at Baucau (110) and the third one at Maubisse (120). During their stay, these Australian investors contact some Timorese supposed to attend Hospitality Industry Courses in Australia. The news comes as an explosion, agitating the island and leading the most naive into daydreaming.

To understand fully how the lack of proper structures is so much part of the daily life in Timor, we cannot help mentioning that the first local agency of an insurance group is only now established in Dili.

During this month, Ramos Horta causes another uproar. In an interview given to "The Northern Territory News," under the heading "*Various tensions on the rise in East Timor,*" Horta comments on the inability of the Portuguese administration to understand the Timorese, who are lagging behind in education, professional opportunities and prospects. When the issue of that daily paper reaches Timor, on February 8, the interviewee has to publish a public disavowal of the interview, which is interesting to leave on record here:

"IN THIS PSEUDO-INTERVIEW, SOME SERIOUS AND DISREPUTABLE ALLEGATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO ME MUST BE FIRMLY REBUTTED. AUSTRALIA'S GROWING INTEREST ON TIMOR IS ONLY NATURAL, WHEN THAT COUNTRY FOLLOWS, IN THE UNITED NATIONS, A VERY HARDLINE IN RELATION TO PORTUGAL AND ITS COLONIAL PRESENCE IN "ULTRAMAR"[THE OVERSEAS PROVINCES].

"OBVIOUSLY, IT WAS IN OUR BEST INTEREST NOT TO GIVE ANY INTERVIEW, BUT I AGREED WITH KEN WHITE TO LEND HIM A DRAFT I HAVE BEEN PREPARING, TO USE AS BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR HIS REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE "THE AUSTRALIAN" AS A COUNTEROFFENSIVE TO THE VIGOROUS ATTACKS THAT (GOUGH) WHITLAM HAS BEEN PERPETRATING AGAINST PORTUGAL AT THE U.N., AND TO ALERT AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC OPINION ON THE ISSUE.

"I ACTED IN PURE GOOD FAITH, TRUSTING THE HONESTY, IMPARTIALITY, AND THE SENSE OF DUTY OF A COLLEAGUE [SIC]. SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT AND WITHOUT ANY LOGICAL SEQUENCE DISTORTED A SERIOUS AND OBJECTIVE WORK, IN WHICH I TRY TO DEFEND JUST AND HUMANE POLICIES, ACCEPTED BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE.

"SUCH SLANDER CANNOT BE TOLERATED. THE TRUTH IS THAT I ENDOW NO IDEAS OPPOSING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PORTUGUESE NATION AND I COULD NOT ASSUME ANY ATTITUDE OTHER THAN THE UNCOMPROMISING DEFENCE OF THE PORTUGUESE PRESENCE ON THE OVERSEAS PROVINCES."

Thus, spoke Horta about the interview that he gave in Australia but so vehemently denied back in Timor. A few days later,

it is reported that Ramos Horta has been finally accepted to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. There, he is to attend a 4 years' course in Journalism specialising in Foreign Affairs, but it never eventuates due to the looming civil war.

On the 26th of February, two years of Governor Aldeia's rule are completed, with the traditional marches and parades of "Residents' Companies," "Mocidade Portuguesa"²⁷ and school kids. Just another flag-waving ceremony. Two days later, the Governor of Indonesian Timor, Colonel El-Tari, Commander-in-Chief of Nusa Tenggara Timur (West Timor) officially visits Dili for the first time. It is the first such visit since 1967, and the second for El-Tari, a faithful follower of Suharto, installed in that position since the aborted communist takeover of 1965.

3. MARCH, A FATEFUL MONTH

On the eleventh day of the third month, without any forewarning, the Governor Colonel Alves Aldeia leaves for Portugal to "present [to the Government] the problems of higher relevance for the socioeconomic promotion of the Timorese people considered as a priority." On the sixteenth day, in the tiny country town of Caldas da Rainha in Portugal, a group of Army Officers tries unsuccessfully to seize power from Dr Marcello Caetano, the Prime Minister who succeeded Salazar as Head of the State and perpetuator of the dictatorship. Nothing of the quashed rebellion reaches Timor until later.

March 26, the Australian Government presents a formal protest to the Portuguese Government due to the concession by Lisbon, of rights of oil prospecting to the US-based company "Oceanic." The area of contention covers approximately 23,000 sq. miles (59,565-sq. km.) and according to the Australian claim, such area includes parts already under concession to Australia's Woodside-Burmah Oil. Furthermore, according to the Australian formal letter of protest, other parts of the 'Oceanic' concession pertain to an area negotiated between Australia and Indonesia, for oil drilling.

Actually, a third of the area given to Oceanic is in fact, an enclave between offshore projected platforms, given in concession to Australia's Woodside-Burmah. Meanwhile, in Canberra, the Portuguese Ambassador, Dr Mello Gouveia presents the Australian Government with an Official [Protest] Note where his Government declares that it could not recognise the Australian claim since there is no supplementary legislation between the two countries, both signatories of the 1954 International Convention on Maritime Boundaries.

Gough Whitlam reacted energetically to this Note, in a press conference where he affirms, that: "The Australian Government has the right to defend the country's natural resources being questioned in the Timor Sea." The confrontation on such issue is soon to take second place to very serious constitutional crises in both countries.

A controversy about education shakes Timor, with Dr Félix Silva Correia, representative of ANP²⁸ in Timor and Head of the Provincial Department of Education, angrily reacting against critical remarks to the educational structures and alleged increases in the literacy rates. The local paper "A Voz de Timor" publishes, on March 19, a special supplement on

²⁷ MP or Mocidade Portuguesa was a youth paramilitary organisation, created by the dictator Salazar in the fashion of the young Nazi movement.

²⁸ ANP was the only legal political party in Portugal during the dictatorship of 1926 - 1974.

education. Cleverly presented, it includes a monolithic self-appraising interview with Dr Félix Correia. It also has editorial material denouncing his statistical game and putting forward proposals to improve the level of teaching and literacy. Instead of accepting the official figure, the author suggests that the illiteracy rate is 80%.

In the same issue, an article a few decades old ('Education and Autonomy'), by a blacklisted Portuguese author, António Sergio, inspires no comments although it should have been banned from publication. The incoherence of the censors? Immediately, the political machine manipulated by Dr Correia starts a chorus of supportive letters to the editor, most of them signed by the most representative local leaders and officials. The author is subjected to an official inquiry headed by the Acting Governor. Some teachers irritated by the innuendo subscribe a public letter demanding reparation. People in Timor are living the very last days of the decrepit New State²⁹ and unaware of it.

Curiously, Ramos Horta in a few editorials supports Félix Correia. The author (of the "Education - a special supplement") and Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper being a conscripted Army Officer, is subjected to the military ordinance and has to face military justice. Such repressive attitude of the military provokes a symbolic strike of the Government Printing Services where the newspaper is printed. The Acting Governor imposes severe controls on the paper, after such a damaging slip. The author is barred from expressing himself, publicly or to present his defence. This polemic state of affairs drags on until April.

Meanwhile, as Acting Head of the Supply Battalion responsible for all supplies of food and petrol to all units in Timor, the author sees the approval of a new system of petrol utilisation. For the first time, Privates and Corporals (the most disadvantaged economically) are entitled to get military supplies for personal consumption, like everybody else in the Army. It is believed that the Acting Military Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mário Dente, signs the new system without even realising its latitude.

That same day, April 5, because of the new petrol system another controversy arises. The civilian authorities press the Government to intervene and cancel the new system. It is worth remembering that civilians are already subjected to harsh restrictions of fuel since December 1973, whilst the military has at their disposition enough stocks for maximum consumption during 18 months.

The situation is tense, but the military is afraid of intervening again on the eve of the return of the Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General. The Governor, Colonel Aldeia has nominated the author to be in charge of the paper.

In the edition of 19 March, apart from the supplement on Education, the author has included a 'collage' with allusions to the ill-fated rebellion at Caldas da Rainha. Also included is a mention to the controversial book "Portugal and its Future" by the then General Spínola (who would pretty soon become the new Portuguese President), and showing the support such book receives at the United Nations. On some editorials in that same historical issue, a very comprehensive coverage

²⁹ Name given throughout the dictatorship to the political regime in Portugal.

of the problems that might have provoked the rebellion, its precedents and possible outcomes are also published, uncensored. It is a complete success, with the first reprint ever of an issue of the newspaper.

4. APRIL, THE FLOWER REVOLUTION.

Governor Aldeia returns to Timor on the 19th. Upon his arrival at the airport, he delivers the most virulent speeches the locals have ever heard. Denying any representativeness to the so-called "Movement of the Reformist Captains," Aldeia stresses that "the aborted Caldas' Rebellion was severely dealt with, after having lacked support from any quarter and even less among the military." Rejoicing, he goes on and on, to announce finally that:

"All constitutional amendments proposed by me have been totally approved by the Central Government, thus leading the way to a new era of prosperity in Timor. Speaking for all Timorese people, I have the pleasure and the joy of telling you that the Government in Lisbon is happy to help the trustworthy people of Timor, who for centuries have been so decidedly Portuguese."

This speech, the most political delivered by Aldeia, marks a departure from his usual low-key political profile. Some people speculate that he is cashing on the chain of events that occurred during his stay in Portugal. Yet, soon after that, he would be gone into oblivion, never to return. Actually, his best speech marked the beginning and the end of his political aspirations and career.

On April 27 by his direct order, executed by his personal secretary, Dr J. J. Thomás Gomes, the composition of his speech is withdrawn from the presses and the recording taken from the local official broadcasting station. The printed and recorded speech is extremely compromising in terms of the events of the 25 April in Portugal. Thus began, what is to be called the "Aldeiaagate."

Although Timor lacked telex since the previous year there has been radiotelephone links with the outside world. Therefore, when the Flower Revolution happens on the 25 April, some people receive the news via telephone. After that, it is only a matter of spending some hours on the shortwave frequencies.

It is dinnertime and the author is the Deputy Officer-on-duty at the Army headquarters. The senior OIC (officer in charge) is already contemplating his navel after a few of his usual drinks.

The operator at the local equivalent of Telecom, Radio Marconi, rings to say that there would be a personal telephone call for the author in about one hour. Calling the driver to get the Jeep running, in fifteen minutes we are in Dili, anxiously waiting for "the call." The author senses it is something of the uttermost importance because it was previously agreed with his family not to call unless there was an emergency. It was known for long, that all mail and all telephone conversations are being respectively opened and recorded.

Wasting no time, the author asks the driver to get by his place where he mentions the call and asks his roommates (Chief surgeon Prata Dias and Proença de Oliveira, a Dept. Head at the Agricultural Services) to keep their mouths well shut. Picking up his shortwave radio returns to the Headquarters, where reports nothing worth of mention on his round of the city. All night long, the news reports from BBC, Radio Australia, and a host of broadcasters all over the world is monitored (even listening to Radio Pakistan, for the first time).

Next morning, when I am to be relieved by 2nd Lt. Freitas, my comrade in arms asks if I heard anything about Portugal. Trusting no one after all the harassment I had to cope with my newspaper controversy, I replied, *“No. Why? What do you expect to hear?”*

The next couple of days are chaotic, with all sort of rumours and a general sense of disbelief. When the news spreads that the Governor has ordered the impounding of the tape and the printed edition of his speech, most people become aware that the “Carnation Revolution” is no longer a figment of their imagination. The days pass by. Chameleonic opportunism is rampant: overnight everyone became a revolutionary.

The necessary and expected resignation of Colonel Aldeia is taking more time than what people hoped. It is necessary that he submit his letter of resignation, after the now famous speech, in which he so doggedly opposed what is now the new regime.

The rumour that the Naval Defence Commander, Lieutenant-Commander Leiria Pinto, is the local appointed representative of the Junta for the National Salvation grows. This rumour surprises most people since Lt. Com. Pinto is known for his extremely conservative right-wing ideas. Simultaneously, other people claim that the Chief-of-Staff, Major Arnao Metello, a ghostly career Army officer belonging to a well-to-do family, is the only appointee of the Junta. Maj. Metello is a very moderate officer mostly known by his indecisiveness and by the lack of fire when talking about the colonial action of Portugal.

Opposition to the continuation of Colonel Aldeia’s rule grows by the day. It threatens to become a snowballing movement with the military definitely divided between the progressist” - mostly conscripted officers and sergeants, and the “old guard” composed of career officers. Meanwhile, in Portugal, the soldiers are still wearing the red carnations on the barrel of their machine guns, and the people are still very much excited about their newly learned freedom. Hopes are rising for a better future, after 48 years of obscurantism.

The situation starts to clarify by early May, but not all the decrees approved in Lisbon become extensive to Dili. Not a single shot was fired in Portugal³⁰. The regime fell because it was so damn rotten that it could not sustain any frontal massive attack. The celebrated victory is in all newspapers and magazines, but in that strange elusive way is, still light-years away from Timor.

³⁰ Later it was confirmed the death of two secret police members and a by passer.

5. MAY 1974: THE EXPECTATION, FRAUDS, DISHEARTENMENT

Speculation ends when Maj. Arnao Metello is confirmed as the new Portuguese representative in Timor. People demand an immediate, decisive attitude, but he is hesitant. The new legitimate order has not been carried out so far. The Army is growing restive, but Arnao Metello is the ultimate procrastinate, so nothing is done.

PIDE (the secret police force for Information and Defence of the State) has 20 members in Timor. A few are detained in guesthouse conditions. The others are not only free but also still occupying their posts, with housing and cars provided by the State. The administrative bureaucracy steadily resists the New Order. Is the Flower Revolution a media invention? On the other hand, is this the long distance between fiction and reality?

As Dr J. Pestana Bastos writes then:

“The Governor kept on his post for too long (a vicious basic defect). A figurehead, unrivalled as a determinant of a policy and as well determined by it, cannot and should not reverse the keynote, the language, the structure, the coterie, the political philosophy, without inevitably jeopardising himself and the Government he represents and authenticates. This means no lack of consideration or a critical view of Colonel Fernando Alves Aldeia or of its actions. If his behaviour was so far commendable, then it ceased to be so.”

How can we talk about a bureaucratic cog, originating in colonial premises?” Maintaining the heads of Department is a dangerous mistake that later will provoke the need to set up emergency measures. Fundamental positions are kept too long in the hands of individuals, who are totally dependent on the old regime and ferociously opposed to the people and the new regime.

By early May, the Government imposes delegates on the radio, newspaper, and the local airline “TAT (Transportes Aéreos de Timor).” Although there is a newly appointed delegate to Radio Marconi, this entity continues monitoring all telephone calls as previously. Alerted Junta representative, Maj. Metello, (shrugs his shoulders and) replies that *‘there is nothing we should worry about’*. Knowing how Radio Marconi was responsible for many of the political cases created during its first year of existence, we alert people to the above situation. All military mail (and that meant some 95 percent of mail) is still being subjected to censorship. It takes one week to clear mail from the plane before distributing it. Intrigue and rumours flourish during this period.

Many people are ostensibly opposed to the new regime but keep their positions of power and influence. Some people grow disenchanted with the new regime. Others oppose the Governor, still actively working as the supreme authority in Timor. The delegate of the Portuguese Junta is barely noticeable and definitely inoperative.

A major scandal erupts when PIDE officers (Secret Police for Information and Defence of the State) are kept on their positions under a new name of PIM (Military Information Police). They keep their Government-owned houses, cars, and other fully subsidised expenses. Another curious example is that of an Army career Captain still in charge of a sub-unit at

the Army Headquarters, although, he admits being a member of the secret police.

Finally, before the end of May, the Head of the Provincial Education Department is exonerated and the activities of the MP (the Youth Movement based upon the Nazi formula) finally curtailed. Some delegates from the Portuguese Junta are scheduled to come to Timor, bringing with them - one hopes - a fresh smell of red carnations and the Revolution so many have heard about, but nobody has been allowed to see so far.

With them, it comes disillusion and disenchantment. One is a Major Garcia Leandro (later Governor of Macao) well-known to the people of Timor, from a previous two-year commission on there. In those days, he was a mere State Secretary with the Governor Brigadier Valente Pires. Some very serious administrative and economic misdemeanours took place under him. An official inquiry went straight into the archives, but 1,500,000,000\$00 Escudos (AUD\$ 60,000,000) are never recovered. The local Chinese community is pretty adamant that Mr Leandro cannot return and extremely co-operative with some documentary proof of his misdeeds.

Later (October 1974) some Portuguese newspapers speculate about Major Leandro being a contender for the position of Governor of Timor. Nevertheless, since some Timorese based journalists impede him he settles down as Governor of Macao. Meanwhile, back in Portugal, the weekly "Expresso" on 25 May 1974 dedicates most of its front page to Timor, under the heading: ***"TIMOR: a controversial situation, now that the Temple's hawkers are gone."***

In fact, the politico-military situation is a bit confused in Timor. After the visit by the Junta delegates (Major Garcia Leandro and Major Maia Gonçalves) instead of the true voice of a revolutionary government, people are being told that the long oblivious way the colony has been treated before, is to continue. Other people are longing for Salles Grade, previous General Chief-of-Staff in Timor, until 1973. During the controversial visit of the Junta's delegates, Leandro has some very ambiguous and nebulous messages:

- i) *That the M.F.A. (Movement of the Armed Forces and the backbone of the Junta) knows perfectly well, what is happening in Timor, and that there is no need for locally based people to worry or report about it.*
- ii) *That the permanence of Aldeia's consulate is perfectly justified because his activities are predominantly administrative and therefore not political.*
- iii) *That the M.F.A. would not tolerate mini-revolutions or mini-movements and as well, no rebellious acts towards the removal of the Governor and Military Commander-in-Chief, that could only originate in minority groups.*

These ambiguous and dubious statements, lead many people to think that they are expressing more personal views than the guidelines of the M.F.A. Supported by these statements, the local broadcaster threatens that if Aldeia is to be removed there would be a bloodbath, due to his deep knowledge of the local people. Critically we say in the local paper that those postulated premises are fundamentally wrong. In front of hundreds of people, assembled at the School Gymnasium to hear the voices of the Revolution, the then Major Leandro pronounces that the weekly "Expresso" is sensationalist and incorrect on its report about Timor. In addition, he vows to expose, after his return to Lisbon, the

authors of the alarmist news who are definitely conspiring against the peace and tranquillity of the island.

Everybody knows that there are only two people writing to “Expresso”: Cristóvão Santos, Head of the Government Printing Services and/or the author of this book. Both took part in the “Aldeigate” exposé when the Governor Aldeia called traitors the then rebels, now in power. Of course, one copy of the speech is smuggled out of the territory using Australian hippies on their way to Kupang and a second one sent under a false name to an intermediary, so as not to alert the censors.

When the Military Police come without a warrant to search the houses of those two suspects, they cannot find the two missing copies, because they are already on their way to Lisbon. Such material at that stage is too hot to handle or even to keep. These and other facts are relevant to establish the background of what is going to happen later. The imputation of the Governor has its real start on the composition printed and withdrawn, to cover the existence of the speech. One last detail of the session at the Gymnasium, Mr Leandro ordering some people out because they had banners against the “Marcellist Government still in power in Timor.”

Some people could not understand this guided democracy, because when hundreds passed by it they respected it, whether they agreed or not with the banner. The representative of the Junta and the Provisional Government in power in Portugal cannot respect or even, tolerate it. After Mr Leandro and Mr Gonçalves left, there is a certain void. Just before going, Garcia Leandro authenticates the broadcaster’s message on the bloodbath that could be expected if the Timorese people were deprived of Governor Aldeia. Definitely, this was no way to decolonise the most distant and mostly forgotten colony of the crumbling Portuguese Empire!

6. MAY: EMBRYONIC POLITICAL PARTIES.

The April Revolution opened the doors to self-determination of the colonies and the creation of political parties. Although quite incipient, the political life of Timor starts shaping up. Democracy in Portugal and self-determination and independence for its ex-colonies comes simultaneously with the Revolution that topples the undemocratic regime of Salazar and Caetano.

The liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies of Africa are fighting a consuming war thanks to the intransigence of the Salazar regime in Lisbon always unperturbed by the winds of change, namely in the three larger colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.

Meanwhile, in East Timor, the nationalist feeling is being nurtured in the shadows. Because of the socioeconomic underdevelopment and the laggard education system until the 50s, there is a very incipient elite barely able to channel nationalist feelings, but by the early 60s a massive investment drive at the educational level, followed by a slower build-up of the socioeconomic infrastructures of the colony, slightly changes its image.

This also promotes, even if indirectly, the emergence of an elite able to organise the nationalistic feelings and will of the East Timorese. These started expressing themselves during the colonial regime, namely in articles on the local newspaper 'Seara' published by the Seminary, altogether with incipient and camouflaged forms of civil disobedience. Past rebellions against the colonial domination and its immediate repression and subjugation by the Portuguese administration, helped this flourishing national identity.

During May 1974, benefiting from the political freedom granted by the April Revolution two political parties are formed:

- UDT (Timorese Democratic Union) forms on 11 May, starts defending a form of Federation with Portugal (later evolving into a desire for independence). UDT or UDETIM is a predominantly Catholic group formed by Lopes da Cruz, César A. da Costa Mouzinho, João Carrascalão, and Mário Carrascalão.
- ASDT (Social Democrat Timorese Association) forms on 20 May to evolve in September 1974 into FRETILIN [INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR Revolutionary Front]. It proclaims the need for total independence. Its founders and leaders are, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, José Ramos Horta, Nicolau Lobato and Justino Molo.
- Under the ægis of Indonesia, a new party is formed on 27 May, APODETI [Popular and Democratic Timorese Association]. It defends integration in Indonesia under a special autonomous statute. This party never has more than two or 3 percent of popular support. Founders and leaders are João Osório Soares, José Martins, Abel Belo, and Arnaldo Araújo.

Later, other political parties are formed, all them lacking in popular support, such as KOTA and the Labour Party. The Government, under instructions from Lisbon to promote the formation of local political groups, attributes funding of up to Escudos 50,000\$00 (approx. AUD\$ 20,000) to each party.

Both ASDT and UDETIM (UDT) lack initial popular support. APODETI is considered a bit of a joke when it proclaims the historical reintegration of the two halves of the island, under the Indonesian flag.

The initial manifestos of those embryonic political parties have some very curious points that we reckon as important to understand the context in which they were created.

ASDT promises to:

"INTRANSIGENTLY DEFEND THE RIGHT OF TIMOR-DILI BECOMING INDEPENDENT. THE TIMORESE HAVE NATURAL CAPACITIES, AS ANY OTHER PEOPLE, TO GOVERN THEIR OWN LAND. WE, TIMORESE, ARE NOT AN INFERIOR RACE OF INDOLENT PEOPLE - AS MANY DO CONSIDER US - TRYING WHEN DOING SO TO DESTROY OUR DIGNITY, OUR PRIDE IN BEING TIMORESE, OUR LOVE TO THIS FORTUNATE AND BELOVED LAND OF OURS³¹. OURS IS AN INDESTRUCTIBLE IDEAL, TO MAKE TIMOR A FREE LAND INHABITED BY FREE PEOPLE, A LAND OF PEACE AND PROGRESS, WITHOUT HATRED OR RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, WITHOUT WEALTHY PEOPLE EXTREMELY WEALTHY,

³¹ Quote from the 16th century Portuguese epic "THE LUSIADS" by Luís Vaz de Camoens.

WITHOUT ANY DESTITUTE OR PAUPERS. ASDT FIGHTS FOR A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED RIGHT: THE RIGHT TO INDEPENDENCE, AND TOTALLY REJECTS ANY FORM OF INTEGRATION WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES. ASDT WILL ENDEAVOUR THROUGH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO ORGANISE A PLEBISCITE WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS AND BY THEN THE PEOPLE OF TIMOR CAN CHOOSE HIS DESTINY.”

UDETIM (UDT) has in its Organising Committee:

Mário Viegas Carrascalão (Head of the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry),
 Humberto Jorge da Conceição (Head of the Provincial Department of Finance, and later head of the Provincial Department of Economy and prices),
 Domingos de Oliveira,
 António de Sousa Nascimento (Head of the Secretariat of the Provincial Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry), others were:
 Fausto do Carmo Soares,
 Manuel Babo,
 Jacinto Soares dos Reis, and
 Fernando do Rosário dos Mártires.

On their inaugural manifesto, UDT protests against the informers of the PIDE/DGS (secret police) “whose activities are not only an attempt against the freedom and the dignity of their fellow countrymen but highly pernicious.”

The manifesto then goes on “to demand [the Government] to publicise:

1. *The list of informers working for or with PIDE/DGS;*
2. *That all public monies unduly received by those informers revert to the Office of Social Assistance; and,*
3. *That all Public Servants working as informers be immediately dismissed.”*

The curiosity of these demands lies in the fact that it is vox populi that one of the founders of UDT is a very active informer. No list is ever publicised.

In a public rally held at Hatolia expresses that “Portugal wanted to have nothing to do with the Timorese people, and they should start counting only on themselves. It is in their best interest to begin learning Bahasa Indonesia to face the challenges of the future.” These statements originate protests to the newly-formed Commission on Political Orientation. Although this is a consultative body depending directly from Major Arnao Metello, it lacks the power to carry out any resolutions. As expected, this incident provokes no reaction.

7. JUNE: UDT AGAINST ASDT

Indirectly the two major political parties of Timor face each other in a controversy, generated by a Lisbon newspaper. The edition of 21 June of “Jornal do Comércio” contains a special report quoting Agence France Press from Jakarta, where

José Ramos Horta had just obtained (June 17) a letter from Adam Malik, Foreign Minister of Indonesia, supporting independence for East Timor.

The same report also says that the *“three political parties in Timor will soon negotiate with the [Portuguese] Government to postpone a general referendum, initially marked for March 1975.”* UDT promptly denies this, alleging that only the press agencies mention such a date, and the Portuguese Government has not yet fixed such date.

The communiqué adds that:

“The plebiscite and its date should be subjected to the social, political, economic and cultural development of Timor”, [then, non-existent] then almost to set a date without a proper development in those fields, is considered by UDT as a political suicide to the people of Timor, and in such case UDT proposes a massive abstention of voters.”

The article in the *“Jornal do Comércio”* also states:

“Those parties have also agreed on proceeding with the formation of a Provisional Government with native Timorese members.”

UDT would riposte: *“It is the first time we hear such a proposal, and we wholeheartedly approve of it. Nevertheless, we do not foresee any such intention by the Portuguese Government.”*

UDT bases its disbelief on the following points:

- a) *“All senior positions recently vacant were filled by non-Timorese people (e.g., Education, Airlines, Civil Aeronautics Dept.);*
- b) *The undemocratic nomination of Lt. Col. Niveo Herdade, without any consultations with the local parties;*
- c) *The fact that another career Army Officer will simultaneously be in charge as Governor-General and as Military Commander-in-Chief. This leads to question whether in Timor there are no capable people or if the recent separation of civil and military powers, is thus annulled?”*

In the same dispatch from Jakarta’s AFP (Agence France Press) correspondent, the *“Jornal do Comércio”* quoted the Secretary of ASDT, Ramos Horta, as *“willing to initiate a tripartite consultation for the immediate transfer of powers (June 1974) to the cream of the local people, delaying the general elections a further four years.”*

For UDT this is *“anti-democratic unless submitted to a popular vote, and utopian since the Portuguese Government never showed - at any stage - any interest in promoting the participation of Timorese people in government at a local level.”*

This long communiqué adds:

“Ramos Horta considers that “such a universal plebiscite would be fraudulent since 90 percent of the population is illiterate.” For UDT if there are still “many illiterate people among us, this does not mean they are stupid or ignorant because they know fairly well what they want and why they do. So, there is no fraud and to postpone general elections

it will be like perpetuating the colonial situation.”

UDT then goes on to defy the Portuguese Government to “start acting towards the development of Timor instead of talking about it.” This extremely lengthy communiqué, signed by Mário Viegas Carrascalão (until April, 25 Vice-President of ANP in Timor and a Portuguese MP) ends clarifying that:

*“UDT is interested in fighting for Timor in a framework of accommodation with Portugal, **evolving from a Federation to a possible Independence**³². Such scheme will treat Timor on a parity like an arrangement and not as a dependent party as it is. To maintain links with Portugal does not mean continuity, which UDT so strongly opposes.”*

Interviewed by the local radio station, Carrascalão criticises Ramos Horta by stating that “ASDT wants total independence for East Timor” but “will consider any links with Indonesia, if negotiations are held on equal terms.” Carrascalão questions whether this statement will follow the pattern of previous statements by Horta to the “The Northern Territory News” in February 1974. “It seems,” says Carrascalão, “that Horta had dual opinions: One for consumption by the foreign press and another one for the naive.”

UDT is severely criticised by some sectors of the public opinion. The best counter attacks come from Francisco Borja da Costa, who denounces the links between Carrascalão and the old regime, to consider him “an opportunist by calling for the appointment of Timorese in senior positions, since as everybody knows, UDT is the one with graduates on its ranks.”

For Borja da Costa, the communiqué is a constant contradiction, because “it considers the plebiscite a political suicide if the Portuguese do not develop Timor, to admit later that it will be undemocratic to postpone general elections. This views Timor as a colony under political dependence, that will cease when the form of Federation is set but is not Timor a colony under other cultural, social and economic dependence?”

Only political, one might ask?

The public outcry about a new proposal from ASDT, to introduce the teaching of Bahasa Indonesia as an elective for the Teachers Aids’ Course with French as optional, proves that the popular sentiment about Indonesia is not the warmest possible.

8. JULY: THE BLANCHINHA CONTROVERSY.

i) The Doctor and the Doctors. The Beauty and the monster of democracy.

This polemical controversy starts in the first days of July and lasts more than a month. It originates in a letter manifesto sent, by the Timorese-born doctor Blanchinha Varela Rodrigues to the mass media. The letter severely criticises the

³² Author’s emphasis.

doctors and the medicine practised in Timor. The text is first aired on a radio broadcast and immediately after, some pressure applied to avoid its written publication.

Apart from some healthy well-meant demagoguery, Blanchinha does not attack the medicos, although these interpret it as a frontal offence. She only questions a decaying colonial medical structure, which to survive has to rely on underpaid good professionals, forcibly conscripted into the Army. These doctors are not only forced to operate as military doctors but they are, as well, involuntarily compelled to double as civil practitioners in public hospitals, without receiving any extra income.

For outsiders, this situation might sound exploitative and totalitarian, but let us not forget that the Portuguese regime is not known before April 25 as a model of democracy.

Blanchinha considers the problem within an eminently political context - tout-court - and then goes on proposing new structures according to previously set priorities. She goes as far as proposing a medical clinical society free from hierarchic restrictions, where the diagnosis can be reached by consensus between paramedics and doctors. Is this a utopian ambition, even if ideologically coherent, or just a pedagogical mistake on the approach to the subject? We will never know, but this has more power in provoking the ire of the medical practitioners than any other argument.

Further, in her letter, Blanchinha criticises a scheme that systematically exploits the nursing class, by enabling many doctors to behave more like health merchants. Stating the principal diseases of Timor, she suggests the creation of special hospitals, concentrating on malaria (paludism) (malaria), dispiritedness and other typical diseases. For Blanchinha, Timor needs medical schools for tropical diseases, nursing schools and medical surgery schools, to provide their inhabitants with means of survival.

One can excuse her over ambitiousness, sometimes slipping into easy demagoguery, but this is the first time ever, that a general study on Timor health structures is made. The political reactions to this letter manifesto are predictable in a chameleonic society. Therefore, for UDT, the ideas expressed by Blanchinha are “bull” and they “would rather have her operating in loco than being a critic under a medical students’ scholarship.”

Most doctors also subscribe to a public repudiation. This is only the pretext needed to defend the old status quo and the previous regime, against the new political freedom.

It must be noted that the Head of the Military Medical Services, Lt. Col. Buceta Martins, using the antiquated but still in force “RDM” (Military Discipline Ordinance) dating back to 1826(!) is pressing all the doctors under his military command to take sides and to oppose the newspaper “A Voz de Timor,” then finally freed from governmental interference.

Unknowingly, Blanchinha provides them with a perfectly good excuse to attack the embryonic democracy. The readers of “V.T. (Voz de Timor)” oppose the UDT charges and the editor publishes (a then) recent study by Dr Horn, who worked

and lived in China for 14 years during the Mao era. Also printed a new series of articles titled *“The health in Portugal ill-treated by fascism”* with local points of view being advanced by some doctors, who are forced to keep anonymous, to avoid military repression and reprisals.

UDT forces keep the pressure going based upon the experience of some of its members as previous power brokers in ANP (the only political party before April 25) and a definitely unjustified and biased support given by the Government. Such partiality is soon to provoke a showdown between the interim Governor Níveo Herdade and the Junta’s representative Arnao Metello.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed “Ad-hoc Commission for the Mass Media” using its censorial powers, vetoes the publication of a critical article about the Navy Day Celebrations, to which only Europeans are invited, although they represent a tiny minority of all personnel.

ii) The torch changes hands

Finally, on 15 July, a new era starts when Governor Aldeia hands over his powers to the Lt. Col. Níveo Herdade. At the airport, a few hundred people salute for the very last time Aldeia who, tearfully says “God bless you all, whatever the choice may be, may it be for the sake of the Timorese people.” Almost three months to the day, after his return from Portugal, Aldeia leaves Timor, a colony he so dutifully kept in the dark ages of underdevelopment.

iii) Public Opinion Polls - for the first time in Timor

Sociologist, Dr Alberto Trindade Martinho (then Personal Secretary to Níveo Herdade, later Secretary to the new Governor Lemos Pires) compiles statistics and analyses the first public opinion polls, in the history of Timor. On economical activities, it is shown that agriculture represents 92 percent, followed by commercial and industrial activities. Cattle breeding, tourism, and fisheries are the less relevant for the development of the island. Another poll shows the discontentment towards the hospitality industry that caters only for Australian tourists and their high purchasing power (in comparison with local standards) and does not provide enough services to the European (Portuguese) and Timorese people, unable to compete with the purchasing power of the dollar. Is tourism a preserve of the rich and wealthy?

iv) The unqualified manoeuvres

There is generalised agitation, during July, when a one-page leaflet is posted on some very public walls. It is written in broken Portuguese and reads something like:

“The voice of the Armed Forces (Native Privates) to the unions’ political party members:

- 1. Do we want Timor to continue with Portugal and with the flag of Portugal?*
- 2. Do we want no Independent Timor not even at Indonesia’s cost? Otherwise, the A.F. [Armed Forces] (Native Privates), will maintain rectitude or will alert those political party members. For the good of the Province,*
(Signed) The A. F. (Native privates)”

The Independent Territorial Military Command of Timor (CTIT) issues a communiqué on which it is said that:

"The leaflet is immediately confiscated and intended to make believe it was originated by a group of military people.

"Its propagation not known, the main hypothesis being considered: - a personal initiative of one or more Private Soldiers; a mystifying initiative to suggest that the Portuguese Armed Forces are somehow linked with a political group, and thus discredit and agitate the public opinion, against the revolutionary Program of the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal, guarantor of the 25 April.

"The CTIT will not tolerate any challenges to the climate of peaceful debates, openly and frankly held on the destiny of Timor, and to the right to choose, debate and assume its decisions for the future of this land who so many calls theirs."

On the same subject, "The House of the Timorese" in Lisbon issues a Press Release, considering the leaflet

"A provocation, a shame. Highly suspicious, such document must be vehemently repudiated, because it is a self-proclaimed voice of the minorities (intentionally and savagely) silenced, so much common to the federalist thesis that proposes the continuation of the colonialist and neo-colonialist exploitation."

Then it goes on to denounce:

"Such reactionary manoeuvres, keen to boycott the real fight of the oppressed,"

and to alert the world to

"Disavow the imperialist executioners who continue to massacre people that for more than half a millennium had been under the wretched yoke of the colonial jackal."

This release is the first to show that "The House of the Timorese," in Lisbon is not a political party - per se - but appears set to become the vanguard, both politically and ideologically, of some Timorese. Such verbal excesses well in fashion in Portugal, these days, will most certainly transfigure the moderate ASDT into FRETILIN, a couple of months later.

UDT also repudiates the alleged link with the leaflet, as it is implied by the "The House of the Timorese" and by the CTIT.

v) Unemployment, Discrimination, Sub-Employment, Exploitation.

Various new voices start claiming against the prospects of long-term unemployment that they face, even with proper academic qualifications. In some cases, local people with technical degrees are being denied the right to apply for positions, because preference is given to "metropolitan people ³³." Timorese youth is culturally led to believe that if they study, they will have chances of becoming part of the administrative bureaucracy, but since the turnover of new staff is

³³ Metropolitan Portuguese is the terminology used to distinguish the mainland Portuguese from the islanders and colonial Portuguese.

extremely restricted, their chances are minimal.

They have the ability and capability of being employed, but the colonial structure does not let them in. Another point of contention is the well-known preference by employers (mainly the Public Service) to employ females, to whom they are supposed to pay lower salaries. The right to work is universal and constitutes a basic tenet of citizenship.

Meanwhile, a Commission to defend the interests of the working class is formed, with the support of Ramos Horta. Small and medium-sized firms in Timor have a very small economic dimension in comparison with the ones in Australia; they are no more than very small family businesses. Any value shifting will automatically imply a forward shifting, not always compensated by cost increases. Such companies operate not based on profit; their owner is no more than another salaried employee, who happens to have had the capital outlay to start up business.

Due to the oil crisis of the seventies, inflation coupled with very modest increases in salaries provoked a dead end situation, where the only solution is underemployment with inferior salaries and/or unemployment. Before the minimum wage is determined as mandatory in 1973, many people are labouring for as much as 18¢ a day with an allowance for a soup spoonful of boiled wheat. People under this “award” were normally subjected to very hard duties, more suited for animals than to human beings.

We feel no comments are necessary on such a wage and food allowance. After the introduction of the minimum wage of AUD\$ 1.00/day, a few hundred country and bush people are attracted to the cities, only to face unemployment. That is a brand-new situation for most of them, used to working on small plots of farming or getting all their foodstuffs from Mother Nature. Many small and medium-sized companies have to reduce their workforce simply because they can no longer afford it.

The minimum wage although just and moral has some very negative side effects. No studies were previously done on how it would affect the economy as a whole. Governing colonial outposts is always easy, you just decree something and to hell with feasibility or impact studies.

A few positive notes on this quick labour-force summary are provided by S.A.P.T.A. (Agricultural Society “Fatherland and Work”), one of the biggest agricultural based companies, to provide dormitories and cafeterias (sort of) for its employees. Unfortunately, such measures are an almost total failure, because they are not accompanied by pedagogic and social training. The workers keep on eating on the ground like they always done and sleep underneath the beds.

9. AUGUST: FOOD QUEUES AND PANIC

The month starts under the sign of the gossip, and an alarmist one. In fact, the Government is forced to broadcast appeals for everybody to remain calm, stating that the Army is the guarantor of peaceful freedom. We refer to APODETI, a small party with not much representativeness, drawing support mainly from the border areas. Such support is actively

encouraged by psycho-social actions promoted by Indonesia, playing up the lack of groceries.

Praising the future integration of Timor, under administrative autonomy (?), with the Republic of Indonesia, APODETI states that negotiations are already under way for such merger.

The public uproar generates a Government appeal for calm and forces APODETI in a rare public statement to deny that it has lost hundreds and hundreds of sympathisers. The Secretary-general, José F. Osório Soares tries to contain the damage by the rampant speculation, urging all members and sympathisers who have subscribed to the initial Manifesto, to restructure the Party and elect a new Secretariat.

After an increasing alarmist attitude on the subject of currency fleeing the country, the Administration reluctantly decides to impose new measures restricting any foreign exchange operations.

The penalties range from Esc. 1,000\$00 to 500,000\$00 (AUD\$ 40 to 20,000) for anyone involved in the flight of capital from Timor but not a single fine or charge is ever applied. Actually, the situation is much more damaging than the officials are willing to admit. For a few months the local issuing bank, the “Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU)” had no currency for exchange (notes and/or coins) but only Traveller's cheques, although it is the only entity authorised to deal with foreign currency. Forestalling and black-marketing is pretty common, US\$ dollar quoted at Escudos 25\$50 is often purchased at Esc. 50\$00, and the Australian dollar valued at Esc. 34\$00 is exchanged at US\$ dollar black market value.

On the other hand, when conscription time reaches its end, each person is entitled to transfer an amount proportional to his salary. With the help of some staff of the building company in charge of roads (Moniz da Maia, Serra & Fortunato) a much higher amount is actually transferred.

The ridiculous imposition of no parity value between the Escudo (Portugal) and the Escudo (Timor), creates an artificial value for the local currency, without any set value in foreign exchange markets, apart from West Timor where it is devalued by 30 percent.

The Provincial Services in charge of policing the exodus of capital and currency are underhanded and incapable of avoiding the huge loopholes because the majority of Europeans are directly or indirectly black marketeers.

The Government meanwhile, considering the continuous rationing of essential foodstuffs, appoints some Commissions to study the problem. These will concentrate on the shortage of wheat, rice, and beans, as well as on the updating of the subsidised prices at the Dili market, proposing the measures thought capable of solving the crisis.

During the last few months, it became a Dili feature the sad spectacle of hundreds of Timorese (non-white and non-Chinese) scattered under the scorching sun, for a few hours every day. They were just waiting to have the chance of presenting their ID card for a meagre supply of basic staples like rice and sugar. The quantities that these poor people

can buy are scarcely worth the long waiting hours, but they are the only alternative to hunger.

The Provincial Dept. of Economy, thanks to its calamitous activity in the fields of supply and transport edibles and oils, provokes the biggest crisis since the Japanese occupation.

The military, however, suffers no restrictions and rationing after becoming autonomous in 1973 from that Dept. for their supplies.

They use their transport capabilities, to collect and transport hundreds of tonnes of foodstuff (mainly grain), left to rot in various parts of the territory by the ineptitude of the civilians.

The Dept. of Economy is led by the young Turk Dr Henrique Chagas de Jesus, (former Secretary of the then Defence Minister of Portugal, Silva Cunha), acting head of the MP (pro-Nazi youth movement), and one of the official censors in Timor. He always tries to explain and justify the crises by exogenous factors, never admitting that they are mainly due to the inefficiency of the local colonial structures - or the lack of them.

Examples abound, like hundreds of tonnes of rice rotting in Suai (in the South Coast) waiting for transportation that never comes and simultaneously the Government ordering the import of few tonnes from Singapore, at extremely high prices.

The lack of statistical data, planning, stocking policies is amongst the main causes of the crises. Others are the knack for improvisation as a policy, lack of technical competence, and who knows, if not even a deliberate boycott for maintaining the graft and corruption flowing with their so much sought rewards.

How do you expect to run a country as small as Timor, if for long periods people have no access to beer, tobacco, matches, milk, margarine, cooking oil, sugar, potatoes and most other basic staples? On the other hand, the lack of proper road systems, maritime and air structures, and other transportation capabilities are usually mentioned to blame the shortcomings of the colonial administration, instead of being used as aggravating circumstances in the case of the people of Timor versus the colonial power of Portugal.

Just to stress how people cope with these crises, it is worth mentioning that the vast majority of the people suffer them. The minority of European Portuguese (civilians and military) and the Chinese have enough economical means to go through it, to absorb all price hikes and in some cases are even capable of stocking and forestalling. In some cases, the Chinese traders sensing the rising tensions, refuse to reorder stock, fearful of massive civil unrest like what happened a few years before in Indonesia.

The Government Treasury opens its coffers wide open, to pay for small amounts of edibles and oils, from Singapore and Australia. Such policy of squandering would take the Government officials in trips to these and other countries, to "negotiate" the buying of those staples. Instead of organising constant supplies at market rates to offset local

shortcomings, they are buying above market prices for small quantities, barely enough for a few days' consumption.

The military garrison meanwhile is enjoying a boom in supplies to all its remote outposts from six to eighteen months of stocks. This happens thanks to a coordinated policy of transportation with military and civilian vehicles during the dry months and increased storing facilities in faraway places of difficult or uncertain access. Such policy pays up quite well, with the military having no problems to get most items of the daily diet, even when there are delays in the quarterly shipments from Portugal, Angola and Mozambique. Identical measures could have been achieved had the Government imported more trucks for the heavy duties of the non-existent road system, and spent money in making those roads passable. Instead, huge amounts are spent without solving the basic problem.

Two years earlier, in November 1972, the Portuguese construction firm "Moniz da Maia, Serra & Fortunato, Lda SARL" had successfully tendered for the contract to build new roads and aerodromes in the territory. The starting date was initially scheduled for June 1973, but administrative delays in the signing of the final contractual agreement, kept the projects idle, with heavy financial and economic losses.

By November 1973, the building hangars and yards were completed, although the heavy machinery and other equipment directly imported from Japan had already been waiting since August. Other equipment from Portugal and other European countries were mostly undelivered.

Equipment imported from Australia was delayed due to continuous overseas strikes and industrial actions that tried to avoid the equipment being sent to a colonial territory. Various geological studies were equally delayed, and some local ones had to rely on out-dated aerial photographs. These aerial photos related to a dry season and everybody knew that the geoscape changed with every wet season.

Finally, after some indecision, the opening of the new Highway #1, Dili - Baucau in August [1974], started at Fatohai, on the outskirts of East Dili. A road project like this was vital both economically and politically. Since Baucau had the main International airport, such road would provide a land-based link with the capital.

In terms of internal economical value, the new road Ermera - Maliana (this town close to the Indonesian border) would not only serve a burgeoning populated region but also provide a better route for the coffee centre of Timor (Ermera) to channel its crops.

Another internal road link was to be built between Dili and Same in the South Coast, crossing the territory through highland towns like Maubisse and Ailú and thus providing penetration for new supply routes of the lush south croplands. The initial project called for the construction of five aerodromes, but due to financial constraints that were curtailed. The future new International Airport at Dili would be 1,400 m. long (approx. 0.87 miles) and fully sealed with asphalt, capable of handling major traffic. Yet, according to the size of international air carriers, it was too small to accommodate the big Jumbos and exaggeratingly too big for the medium and small sized aircraft.

The Viqueque aerodrome (at the Southeast Cape) was annulled, and the Maliana aerodrome would be improved and expanded to 700 m. (0.43 miles) but still in no much better condition than a good dirt track.

This would allow for two new aerodromes, 1,400 m. long (0.87 miles) at Suai (South Coast) and Lospalos (East Coast). By August 1974, the delays threatened to curtail part of these projects, due to the high investment losses suffered by then. As for labour-force, these investments heralded 36 specialist new jobs (thirty of them recruited in Portugal), and 200 blue-collar positions (crane drivers, machine operators, etc.) for local recruitment. All this would yield about Esc. 220,000\$00 (approx. AUD\$ 8,800) per month to be recycled back into the local economy, and a total job creation of about 300 new positions.

As for State sponsored financing, the outlay for the fiscal years of 1973 and 1974 was 240 million Escudos (AUD \$9,6 million) of which only Esc. 130 million (AUD\$ 5,2 million) had been paid.

By mid-August, a team of agronomists led by H. Possinger, B.Sc. in Agriculture is appointed to implement a pilot project of Rural Extension. The initial studies conducted in January 1974 were quite successful, and it was then decided to introduce the new agronomics to local people in a pilot-farm at Maubisse. Similar projects have been quite helpful in Angola, and the Administration is trying to repeat their success in Timor. A small group of coffee producers (small and median plantations) met at Ermera to study the introduction of a Co-op to produce, commercialise, and distribute coffee, from Liquiçá (Northwest coast), Ainaro, and Same (central highlands). Although the idea is interesting - in itself - and of enormous value for the producers, never takes off the planning stages.

CHAPTER IV- ECONOMY, first person singular

I) GOVERNMENT SPEAKS OUT

The restructured weekly "A Voz de Timor" decides in August to interview all the Provincial Heads of Department to produce an analysis on the State of the Economy. Dr Chagas de Jesus, head of the Economy Dept. says:

"In the first semester [1974] the deficit for the foodstuff products reached five million Escudos (approx. AUD \$200,000). Due to internal and external reasons, there was a retraction of consumption and the exporting countries decided to export only after advanced payment for the supplies."

This fact creates havoc in the local capitalistic structure, highly inefficient, disorganised and lacking financial liquidity at short-term. The reduction of imports due to financial constraints, the fast evaporation of the already thin stocking levels combined with an increase in the consumption of the main staples, only helps to accelerate the crisis. Imported potatoes although tax-exempted rise in price from Esc. 2\$50 to 10\$00/kg. (Approx. from 10¢ to 40¢ per kg). Rice becomes price controlled.

When the Dept. of Economy distributes rice for retail, the main traders in Dili (Tai Ing, Fernandes, Hia Seng) have to sell it at the same price (Esc. 8\$00/kg. or 32¢/kg.) in Viqueque (east coast), Baucau (northeast) or Suai (South Coast). Being Dili an urban centre where nothing is produced but everything was consumed, it is easy to see why huge crops of rice were left to rot. This causes an enormous surplus of rice in the producing areas and incredible shortages where it is needed. The lack of road systems and the difficulties of organising transport caravans coupled with the prohibition of the retailer shifting forward any transport costs on to the price of rice, make it impossible to benefit from good crops. On the other hand, the Government ends importing small quantities from Australia and Singapore at Esc. 15\$80/kg. (63¢/kg.).

Dr Jesus then went on to say:

"The Government also intends to introduce some incentives to the installation of husking mills, since most cereal producing areas are remote with very limited access facilities. In the case of the rice, such measures will alleviate transport costs, because with the husking being done at the origin, the total transportation costs will be reduced by 40 percent."

"Sugar has also been a problem, with an annual consumption of 1,400 tonnes. The future values of the commodities have been increasing and Mozambique, is our main supplier, is now diverting more and more quantities of cash on rising prices. This has forced us to start importing sugar from Australia. As for beer and tobacco, we have consolidated the stocking levels and at short-term, no further rationing will be implemented, although we are looking at new fiscal and customs structures to deal with future imports of foreign beer and tobacco."

"Lately we granted a permit for the import of 100 tonnes of Australian maize. By now [August 1974] there is the demand for maize in the coffee producing regions of Ermera with a good offer from crops in Suai, what seasonally causes shortages in Dili. We do not have enough statistical data on total production output, but the subsidised price of maize will have to be looked at, even if that represents a rise in the cost-of-living. The Government is aware of the existence of a dual commercial circuit: the legal and the traditional ones, the latter being quite effective during shortage periods.

"After November 1973, Singapore ceased to export fuel oil and forced us to resort to Australia, but the quantities made available to us were never sufficient for the local consumption needs. Since the Australian exporters have been less than stable, we had to support ever increasing prices and lately, we rely on petrol (for cars and planes) from Australia and diesel and oils from Singapore. More recently, Indonesia agreed to supply us with 200,000 litres of petrol and oils. The price hike cannot be avoided and is only due to the imported inflation."

This totally alienated and often-contradictory statement of Dr Jesus is a fine example of policymaking in Timor. The knack for improvisation, the wanting, even at a statistical level, this last moment planning of suitable replacement for importing markets was rather pathetic. Those shortages refer to products with very limited replacement elasticity and they were main staples.

Customs exemptions are established 'in extremis', instead of being preordained to program costs, profitability, and price policies. How many importing licences are never used, and when they are, who controls them? How many cases are there of overpricing? The only way seems, in economic terms, a fast transition from pauper to bankrupt. With colonial powers like these, the colonised need no enemies.

II) THE AGRICULTURE UNDER SCRUTINY

As for Agricultural Resources, the main component of the Timorese economy, let us follow the statements provided by Mário Viegas Carrascalão, Head of the Provincial Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry:

"The soil lacks nitrogen. Nitrogen-based fertilisers would be a success, multiplying three to five times the agricultural output. The maximum output without the fertilisers averages ¾ tonne per hectare, whilst with proper fertilisers could reach eight tonnes/ha. I do not agree with the proponents of expanding the cropping areas in order to increment rice production, that better means of tilling the soil would provide such an increase. We try to fight plagues but we lack the phytosanitary means to do so. The maize crops have different outputs, in the hilly and mountainous areas they reach only 300 kg. /ha and on the plains, they reach 1,000 kg. /ha.

"Local people are not used to coming and plant their crops on the plains, because they lack infrastructures, like drinkable water, the diseases are rampant like malaria (paludism) (malaria) and no resettlement policies were ever presented to them as feasible alternatives to their traditional ways.

“Although the main dietary staple products are heavily subsidised, their prices do not cover the cost at the origin, and the farmers feel they are being defrauded and cheated because they compare the price of the locally produced potato at Esc. 3\$60 (AUD 14¢) with the imported one at Esc. 10\$00 (40¢). We introduced some pilot farming at Maliana and Betano where we assist the farmers with new techniques, apart from this we also provide some sort of support or another to farmers in isolated areas like Oé-cusse Ambeno, Zumalai, Lautém, Viqueque.

“On the field of horticulture, absolutely nothing has been done for the past five years. Our capacity of assistance is very restricted by the lack of agricultural technicians and by transportation. Most of our technicians have to walk or horse ride to visit some places. When in 1960 cattle breeding became autonomous from Agriculture and Forestry, and started being dependent of the Veterinary Services, a measure I strongly disagree with, the chances of coordinating our efforts in terms of manpower and initiatives on both fields went astray.”

“We lack proper equipment and machinery to facilitate the means of production, sometimes people ask us for tractors, but we do not have enough of them to be lent. Sometimes, in places like Timor, the introduction of new machinery makes people indolent because they can start producing more with less work, and then feel contented to continue producing to maintain their incomes. Least we forget that the land is toiled by people basically illiterate and culturally very low.”

“The figures for assistance provided by our Department have been, as follows:

AGRO-FARMING 1970-1973	# AGRO FARMERS ASSISTED	HECTARES TOILED
1970	544	1 030
1971	988	1 872
1972	1715	2 054
1973	4161	3 182

“This evidently shows the increment on the support given lately. The credit facilities to agriculture are extremely limited in Timor, and the very small farmer does not get any access to it because he cannot provide a guarantor. Our credit structure is poised to help who least needs it. As for forestation, our resources a meagre Esc. 800 000\$00 per annum (AUD \$32,000) is barely enough to maintain previous investments in the sector, and the results can only be seen in long-term projection, of between 40 to 50 years. Timorese do their usual burning of vegetation, two or three times a year, although they are damaging the forests, they aim to clear the soil for pastures, to kill animals (rats and snakes) and to protect their traditional cultivation. It is very hard to change their traditional ways without providing them with means to do away with them.”

As colonialists pondered development policies, policies developed.

III) THREE WAYS TO DECOLONISATION: *Two Ways of Being in the Lost World of Timor*

The political party ASDT, meanwhile, issues a communiqué where it states:

1. *Considering that the fight for the decolonisation of Timor in view of its future independence can only be fast and efficient, if fast and efficient, is the reform or - even - the replacement of its complex socioeconomic - cultural and administrative structure, typical of colonial powers;*
2. *Considering that to achieve an efficient decolonisation of structures is prioritary to decolonise mentalities, ways of acting and thinking, well embedded in the minds of so many people, responsible for the future of the colony;*
3. *Considering the economic and financial debility of Timor worsened by a disguised commercial strike and lots of illegal transactions;*
4. *Considering that Timor cannot continue to be a haven for political and economical "parachutists," from different quadrants of life; ASDT opposes vehemently:*
 - a) *The transfer of a civil servant belonging to the Administrative Staff of Guinea-Bissau;*
 - b) *The extension of provisional duties of an Administrator attached to the Timor Public Service in Portugal, thus preventing the creation of a newly vacant position;*
 - c) *The abusive permanency of a local government staff on extended long leave in Portugal, with obvious mischief for the economic development of this colony;*
 - d) *The promotions and nominations of various staff to the colony's higher positions, according to fascist and paternalistic methods of recruiting cadres;*
 - e) *All acts contrary to the public morals, mainly the abuse of the Timorese women, often done by mere abuse of power."*

On the other hand, the other major party UDT broadcasts an editorial on their weekly radio program "Mau Alin" [22 August 1974]:

"We must aggregate all Timorese of good will and valid opinions to find clear solutions to make them free from hunger, misery, ignorance, fortuitousness and exploitation, to which they have been subjugated for the last centuries. To create a future based upon the few positive material benefits obtained - so far - and upon the valid contribution of missionaries and some "good" Portuguese who offered in holocaust the best of their lives, to enrich the culture and the Christian values of the Timorese.

"We want to maintain a link with Portugal, not like Portugal Colony that UDT deeply repudiates, but as members of a lusiad [Portuguese-speaking] Commonwealth. If Timor, like the Minister for inter-territorial Coordination, Dr Almeida Santos, regrettably remarked is a "motionless transatlantic steamer", if it has cost too much money to the Portuguese nation, which Indonesia is not willing to replace as a financial backer, it is only because the fuel sent by the good Portuguese people to make it across the seas in search of progress was not placed in the real fuel containers, but instead was re-exported to other transatlantic steamers.

"If someone tells you that the independence and autonomy are not realistic because of lack of natural resources, do

not you trust them. The resources are here, all we have to do is to discover and develop them. We will not even mention the results of the oil prospecting done by foreigners on our territory because they are increasingly sealed in the Council of the Gods.

"We intend to provide technical, financial and human support to benefit the especially disadvantaged groups, to avoid that Timor becomes the special sale item of the ex-colonial Empire, that so much worried and disgusted Dr Almeida Santos."

[**Author's Note:** It might seem unbelievable, but these words now carry not as much weight as they did when first pronounced in 1974 or is it just because we are now feeling out of place with what we lived then? Definitely, the time has cast a heavy patina on the political coming out of age for East Timor].

IV) RELIGION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Religion and the Catholic Church in East Timor are the focus of an interview by "A Voz de Timor" with Monsignor Martinho Lopes, acting Governor of the Diocese of Dili:

"For a population of 659,102 inhabitants and a Christian population of 196,570 members, the Diocese of Dili has only 44 priests, eight brothers, 49 sisters, 120 faith monitors, 80 religious teachers and catechists. The Church has been actively promoting the social development of the Timorese with Diocesan schools for primary and secondary education. The Church does not support any particular political group.

"A reason why the Bishop, D. José, cannot stop fighting against the proliferation of discotheques, is because he is the guardian of the Catholic faith and Christian morals. Knowing beforehand that such places are spreading focus of miasmas, highly venomous that contaminate the urban environment and ruin the souls, as Catholic Bishop in whom God trusts with redemptive souls, redeemable by the holy blood of God dead in the crucifix."

This small extract of the interview serves to show how big is the political power of the Catholic Bishop, capable of continuing to veto the opening of any discotheque or night-club. Curiously, though he does not oppose the opening of slot machines centres. These centres are only accessible to Timorese-born people since the military are totally forbidden to enter such centres, where the pauper Timorese go daily or weekly to spend the miser salaries they earn.

The Timorese native is a gambler, he loves doing it and extracts pleasure from betting, as this example recorded at the Dili hospital, sometime during 1974:

One dead and a seriously injured person as result of a quarrel followed by a bet "Which cutlass [catana] cuts better, yours or mine?" and zap! Each of them tries to behead the other. The surgeon picked up the pieces.

Another surrealistic example:

A local tribesman rebelling himself against the unfaithfulness and infidelity of his woman in Barlaque³⁴ bets with her. Next time he would find her with another man, he would behead her and take it to the military authorities. This scene occurred in late 1973, in the mountainous interior of Timor. What a shock it was for the Portuguese sergeant when the Timorese come to the barracks with the head of his unfaithful wife, clutched under his arm, like a fighting cock, and volunteers himself to the authorities! In East Timor fiction is not invented, it is part of each day's events.

V) THE GOVERNMENT THAT DID NOT GOVERN

Meanwhile back in politics, a month after his inauguration as Interim Governor-General, Lt. Colonel Niveo Herdade decides to go on a crisscrossing exercise of the colonial territory, visiting Oé-cusse Ambeno, Manatuto, Lospalos and Liquiçá. Some of his speeches may be useful for a future historical - political study of the Portuguese colonisation like this at Manatuto:

"I do not accept that ancient hatred can be, here and now, disencumbered . . . without work, there can be no riches. What the people decide is what will be done, but in order to do so, they must prepare themselves to be capable of deciding... the administrators, as well as the military, have to be politically neutral..."

Moreover, at Lospalos he said:

"Although I have not been in Timor for long, I have noticed the respect people have for the military here to care for their well-being and also their respect for people from the administrative branch. It is important that the people convince themselves that they ought to work very hard, respect the authorities, their friends, and their enemies. We have to deal with the problems in a civilised way and I want to continue to trust the people of the mountains. They must respect their chieftains and vice versa. With the new political situation the respect is not finished, yet, on the contrary, now it has to be even bigger. After the 25th April, the Army acquired a new and renewed prestige and all trust us now but in the barracks, there is no place for politics . . . the Army is subjected to the same principles as in any other part of the world: hierarchy, discipline, and abetting by the rules. I do not accept any infringements to this set of rules. As for taxation, I have to stress, it is a duty for all citizens to pay it ...T he days of beheading people are long gone."

VI) CUSTOMS

For people who have never been to Timor it might be important to record here the revenues obtained through imports:

CUSTOMS 1970-1973	PTE (million Escudos)	AUD (million dollars)
1970	50	2

³⁴ Barlaque was a social consuetudinary law equivalent in some ways to our marriage system, but was based upon tribal traditions including dowry and waiting period before consummation.

1971	63.5	2.54
1972	70	2.8
1973	86	3.44
1974 (estimate)	73.5	2.94

It is worth noticing the reduction in the harbour movement (31 ships docked in the first half of 1974 or barely 40 percent of the total number of dockings in 1973). Extensive exemptions are allowed for basic staples, tractors, school books and other items, counterbalanced by a steep increase in the VAT (ad valorem tax, or value-added tax) on the C.I.F. value of the imports.

The Director of Customs, Mr João Couto dismisses the feasibility of converting Dili into a duty-free zone, in an interview to "A Voz de Timor:"

"It would damage the Provincial Budget. Theoretically, the creation of a free zone if it is not an entrepôt, could cause no problems for Dili, since the merchandise would be re-exported or if imported for consumption subjected to all customs taxes, but now, we do not seem to think of it as opportune.

"As far as we know, no case of illegal entry of any drugs has been detected in Timor.

"Our taxes on all products are not high: the coffee, being the main export, is subjected to a 5 percent flat tax on its commercial value, plus 7% export tax, plus 1.5% duties, plus 4¢ per kg."

VII) CATTLE BREEDING

For Dr Horácio Soares, head of the Provincial Veterinary Services, Timor offers

"Good mesomorph conditions, with all its microclimates and vast plains for cattle breeding that give it the highest density of cattle breeding in all Portuguese territories. Numerically the bubaline (buffalo) race is the most important whereas the bovine is the least important. Although people complained that during 1973 there was a shortage of red meats, according to the veterinary census there were plenty:

Cattle population		Culled for consumption:	
swine	223,000	swine:	3,500 (1,750 in Dili)
ovine and caprine:	192,000	ovine and caprine:	2,500 (1,250 in Dili)
bubaline:	128,000	bubaline:	2,000
equine:	112,000		
bovine:	85,000	bovine:	4,000 (2,000 in Dili)
other:	41,000	other:	N/A

According to Dr Soares:

“These numbers show that there is no reason for the crisis, but since cattle belongs to a traditional type of (cattle) exploration it is often used as means of ostentation and to show off personal and familiar prestige and affluence, without much concern about nutritional or economic concepts. The Veterinary Services has two fostering stations in Timor, one at Same on the South Coast and the other at Lospalos at the south-east coast, but they are overburdened and not enough to meet the demand for assistance.

“The Government has been fostering the distribution of bovine cattle to private entities, but too many people want the cattle to be raised in the traditional way: with the animals all by themselves, without proper handling, what often causes their demise. Today [August 1974] we have something like 500 hundred requests to receive bovine cattle totalling 1,500 heads because it is so easy to ask for and receive cattle free. We have other problems to solve the lack of enough dairy products and only for this we might need more than AUD \$150,000.”

The interview ends with a series of grave accusations against the technicians and staff at Dili, what immediately provokes a public outcry since Dr Soares is well-known by his autocratic ways. A few weeks later, Dr Soares is suspended and summarily dismissed. Such is an unparalleled measure in the annals of Timor.

VIII) A SECOND REGATTA, A SECOND NEWSPAPER AND YET ANOTHER POLITICAL MANIFESTO

Coinciding with the much-touted Oceanic Regatta Darwin - Dili, the political party ASDT issues its newspaper “NAKROMA” to be published fortnightly. The regatta is the social event of the year in East Timor, for the second year in a row, bringing in about 200 tourists and a total of Escudos 1,3 million (approx. AUD \$37,000). Meanwhile, UDT publishes yet another political manifesto. From this provisional document, one can learn that:

“UDT has as its objectives and principles the following lines of action:

- i) To hastily promote the social, economic, cultural and political development of the Timorese people under the flagship of Portugal;*
- ii) To fight for self-determination of the Timorese people, and to orient it toward a system of Federation with Portugal, for later achieving total independence;*
- iii) To integrate Timor in a commonwealth of Portuguese-speaking countries;*
- iv) To accept the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;*
- v) To pursue a policy of good neighbourhood with other countries;*
- vi) To defend and to enrich the Timorese culture;*
- vii) To promote a just share of the national income;*
- viii) To fight actively against corruption.”*

These principles will drastically change in the months to follow.

IX) TIMOR WATERS OR BACKWATER TIMOR?

Meanwhile, the Head of Naval Forces, Lt. Commander Leiria Pinto, in a lengthy interview with the "V.T. (Voz de Timor)" newspaper declares how good the prospects are in the naval front:

"Some time ago a representative of a fishing holding with Portuguese and Italian capital and Japanese know-how approached the Governor to establish a fishing emporium based at Dili, equipped with refrigeration chambers and huge storage facilities. All the government had to provide for was a new dock, in return, it would be totally supplied of fish and would export the remainder. An interim agreement was reached with the permit for the shipping company to establish a refrigeration ship for six months based at Dili and paying only the customary harbour fees. The plan for a future docking facility is already being studied and the refrigeration chambers will most probably be at Tacitolu (10 km. west of Dili) to avoid congestion of the Dili Harbour facilities. Advantages of such move will be:

- *Immediate and regular supply of fish to Timor;*
- *Appropriate training of the Timorese on the technical fields of the fishing industry;*
- *An immediate increase of the reserves (exchange) for the territory with harbour fees of Esc. 10 000\$00 (approx. AUD \$320.00) daily or the equivalent to AUD \$12,500 monthly.*

"The government currently has three small refrigeration chambers, two at Dili and another in the Ataúro Island. As far as verification and control go, we have to admit that due to sheer lack of personnel it is only done at Dili. We intend to build a beacon lighthouse at the Jaco Islet on the far eastern coast, to help guide the navigation. The only operating beacon is actually at Dili and its range does not exceed 12 miles. The harbour at Dili can take in ships with 145-m. length and a loaded draught of 9 meters, although it lacks refuelling capabilities, refrigeration chambers, and a naval dockyard. The harbour activities are mainly restricted to loading and unloading. Until this year, only one commercial ship establishes the commercial links between Timor and the outside world: it is the "Musí," ex-KPM recently acquired by a Singaporean company, who sails in every month.

"All merchandise from Europe is processed at Singapore and transported to Timor by the "Musí," with a total loading capacity of 1,000 tonnes although normally carries only between 300 and 600 tonnes. The links with Australia are normally established through the "Broriver" every three months but on a very irregular basis. We would like to see normal links established with Macao, recently established with the "MacDili," a two-tonne capacity vessel belonging to the "Macao Society for Tourism and Entertainment (STDM)."

"The Government has only two small barges that continuously market products from the north coast to Dili. Being the South Coast the food bowl of Timor, and after the disappearance of the "Arbirú," it was agreed that a new barge with a 150-tonne capacity and a towboat were desperately needed. The new barge "Lifau" is now being built (30 metres length, loading capacity 180 tonnes) meanwhile the small barge "Comoro" is being used for touristic purposes between Dili and Ataúro Island."

This is the overall view of August 1974. Although the launch "Tibar" equipped with a cannon machine gun is not

mentioned, the reason for not mentioning the main naval defence force is probably the fact that “Tibar” was seldom operational, spending more time in the dry-dock than in the waters. Another example: four Timorese students who spent a couple of years in Portugal learning totally inadequate fishing methods.

Slowly, one can see the total lack of structural means emerging from the picture. East Timor is just like this. Nothing is done, all the incentives are denied a fair chance, and all the efforts to improve are fatally destined to face the disillusion and the discouragement. Timor is this land without a chance for survival, a slow death (so slow and impending that most people can even believe that Timor lives).

Timor where the time clocks stopped long ago, a land where only the words have a life for themselves, sadly mistaken by the “Loké dalan foun” [The way to the development], a way for total stagnation timidly disguised. A calm land where nothing, absolutely nothing ever happens.

CHAPTER V – THE COUNTDOWN

1. TIMOR AN IMMOBILISED TRANSATLANTIC STEAMER OR THE MALIGNED WORDS?

In Portugal, by the end of August [1974], Dr Almeida Santos takes part in a roundtable discussion about the prospects of Timor, organised by the weekly “EXPRESSO” that will be severely criticised by a senior NCO, Dr Pestana Bastos:

“Timor - a transatlantic steamer anchored between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans? - Or is it merely grounded? Timor, a deficit exploit, cheaper or dearer than the gardens of ‘our’ Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon? A thorny problem or an insoluble one? Dr Almeida Santos refuses it as a bargain from the lost Empire; Indonesia does not want it as a deficit of a future one. Independence? Unviable? Have we consulted Australia? Perhaps the Philippines, Japan was interested some time ago, for the United States is a bit far away. Well, Dr Santos did not express himself exactly like this. Minister Almeida Santos neither could nor legally say it, not even personally in a round tabled conversation. Even if we disagree with the reasoning, the reasons do not become more reasonable. Let us reconsider them, although they are already reconsidered. Perhaps I might suggest reconsidering 600,000 of them.

“Magnanimous they are and if we ignore them, it is just like proposing a new Constitution before we even have a chance of changing it: “How 600,000 people may lose their nationality without being asked. Did not they acquire it the same way? It may be partially true but not entirely relevant. Someone should ask if they want to keep it, not if they want to get it. Even if their notions are fragmentary, not totally precise, or incorrect, they have the right to change them, to decide to correct them.

“They have the right to propose - or not - any form of association or privileged status, and there are more than nine million [population of Portugal in 1974] extra reasons that have not - so far - washed their hands on Pontius Pilate wash-basin. All this relates to the natural right to self-determination and/or independence of the people. Alternatively, shall we allow only for the temporal self-determination and refuse the right to independence?

“Shall we consider that self-determination is enough since we started giving self-determination to the colonies but we have not reached yet the local councils and municipalities? There are two types of dependence: the dependent one, and the one on whose dependence they rely. Therefore, to be fair, we should listen to both parties who interdepend. If by any guilty complex or by an urge to adopt the current fashion, one feels - you [Dr Almeida Santos] feel - Timor as a hindrance, we should then establish “Who feels and how does it feel?”

“If, under the sombre disguise of ideologies or mere selfishness you want to have free reins to till your garden by the sea [Portugal], let us discover first if there is a consensus or at least a majority opinion on the subject. If for a trip back to Europe, we do not require an old steamer anchored in the antipodes, by withdrawing the passport to the crew, we do not free ourselves from the obligations towards them. I ignore if the roundtable debate has

mistaken the Minister Almeida Santos with the man or with the Provisional Government or even with national feelings. If it did they are all absolutely mistaken."

This critical opinion from Dr Pestana Bastos, a controversial and somewhat eccentric psychiatrist reveals the love he feels for Timor, where he has lived for a few years and where he has always pursued the fight against paternalistic statements pronounced by the colonial powers. In a certain sense, Dr Bastos portrays knowledge of local feelings, he understands and feels Timor, he remembers perhaps too vividly - the distorted way how everything related to Timor is always reported to the outside world. These bits and pieces may help you understand what is going to happen.

2. SEPTEMBER: a month of expectations.

I) A RETIREMENT OR A FRUSTRATED DISMISSAL?

By mid-September, one reads with sheer stupefaction, that Governor Aldeia retires upon his request from the post of Governor. He is decorated for the zeal, competence, and intelligence shown during his years in the position. This is a shameful example of the abandon of Timor [by Portugal]. Some political interests (what kind of interests?) are tantamount to a fatal oblivion of Timor by the new rulers in Lisbon. It is, by now, quite correct to assume that the Revolution of the 25th April was not designed to be applied to Timor, Portugal has not given it what always refused: HELP.

Self-determination and independence should carry a price, to be paid by all Portuguese and not by the Timorese alone. Timor asks and receives nothing but vague promises and meaningless words.

False options raise hopes too high and too fast, and when the decolonisation arrives, at last, it is too little too late, thus creating a situation of civil war first that will soon become the guerrilla war being waged until 23 years later. War, never felt as necessary or even desired, is the imposition of a false option, under the assumed name of Timor, the building up of an ideological abyss based upon the revival of ancestral hatred. On the other hand, is this, what some are calling the original path of the Portuguese decolonisation?

The Vietnamization of today's guerrilla war is based upon folly errors, dating back many centuries and unfolding in a quick succession of grave mistakes over a period of eight months, as we will see next. The partisan approach and the pseudo-exemption of the so-called political parties create a rift between the Maubere people [Timorese] that 500 years of colonial rule have not achieved. Obvious accusations have to be fielded against a revolutionary process that is praised (or shall we say, self-entitled?) as peaceful, that in the end is nothing but bloodthirsty. How can one justify that the Absolute Impossibility has actually happened in Timor?

II) A RESHUFFLE IN THE NEWSPAPER "V.T. (Voz de Timor)"

The Naval Commander Manuel Lourenço Pereira, founder and nominal director of the local newspaper "V.T. (Voz de Timor)" [A Voz de Timor] resigns, immediately replaced by Francisco Lopes da Cruz, a native Timorese connoted to the

Central Political Bureau of UDT³⁵.

The author [of this book], dismayed by the rampant political factionalism decides to resign as Editor-in-Chief shortly afterwards, being replaced by the Senior Staff Editor, Dr Alberto Trindade Martinho, the author of the first public opinion polls. Exhausted by more than a year of permanent political infighting, without proper technical, human and material means to perform his duties. Subjected to all sorts of psychological and moral pressures, just because he defended the most sacred principles, the author surrenders to Dr Martinho most of his highly prized documentary evidence about the wrongdoing of previous administrations.

Apart from this work now being presented, one can just hope that one day the archives may become public and show more light upon what Timor was until the end of Portuguese rule. If today, after so many years, I yearn for the use of my public voice again is because I feel my silent years are totally undesired by the Timorese. Frustrated by the evolution of world politics and the fast forgetful pace of people's minds, I sense that my humble obligation is to divulge all I know about what happened then. Maybe someone among the readers - even if there is only one person - may understand the true plight of the Timorese and the highly unjust situation they have to put up to, under Indonesian rule.

Systematically violated and silenced are the Timorese, mere protagonists of a script that does not relate to them at all - once more one might say. Easy political generalisations mistakenly take the false Hera cloud or, in terms that are more mundane, they admit for the whole Timor what is only visible in Dili. Again, the minorities unwittingly decide on behalf of those they purport to represent.

Meanwhile, in Lisbon, President Costa Gomes takes over from President Spínola while in Yogyakarta, Gough Whitlam has talked with President Suharto, and announces that an independent Timor is probably not viable. Dr Almeida Santos announces that his visit to East Timor will take place during October 1974.

III) SEPTEMBER 1974, INDONESIA GETS THE NOD FROM AUSTRALIA (TO INCORPORATE EAST TIMOR) AND STARTS DESTABILISING THE TERRITORY TO ANNEX IT.

Adam Malik, then Indonesia's Foreign Affairs Minister states publicly on 17 June 1974 that:

"East Timor has a right to get independence and Indonesia have no territorial claims over any territory as stated in its Constitution and will try to have a good working relationship with an independent East Timor."

Notwithstanding this statement from the Foreign Minister, five days earlier an Indonesian MP, John Naro is defending the integration of East Timor with Indonesia, and a month later General Ali Murtopo and General Benny Murdani have completed a plan for incorporation of the territory, to be achieved when possible and by forceful means if needed.

³⁵ He would later become a trusted advisor for President Suharto and an ambassador at large for East Timor matters.

The daily "Berita Yudha" on its August 28, 1974, edition editorialises that: ***"The right to self-determination cannot be separated from the general global strategy."***

The notion of trying to integrate East Timor with Indonesia is not new. By the end of 1972 or 1973, the Special Action Group of the Indonesian Secret Service [BAKIM/OPSUS] gravely worried about the advances of communism and the American retreat from Vietnam, was voicing its opposition to a possible independence of East Timor.

General Suharto, who hesitated on accepting the integrationist proposals from some of his generals and advisers, meets on 6 September 1974, at Wonosobo in the Java Island with the Australian Prime Minister. Gough Whitlam offers Australian support for the Indonesia policy of integrating East Timor. A few days later, the Australian, Portuguese and international media report on its headlines "the Australian support for integration" and that "The Australian Government considers this option for Timor to be important for stability in the region."

The official communiqué adds that *"Australian support for the integration of East Timor in Indonesia" depends on "a referendum by its inhabitants approved by the international community."* Later, Australia will forget such proviso and recognise the annexation without the people of East Timor being able to vote for that, in accordance with the international community.

The strategic interests and preoccupation with regional stability combined with the panic created by the advances of communism in Vietnam [Saigon fell on 30 April 1975], the desire of good relations with Indonesia, dictate the Australian Government decision *"in total agreement with President Suharto on the issue."*

The USA support and the Australian agreement [might] have been fundamental for President Suharto to go ahead with the annexation. It is well-known that the sea of Timor between Australia and Indonesia is rich in oil. In 1971/1972, both Indonesia and Australia sign an agreement defining their maritime borders, which obviously exclude the gap between Portuguese Timor and Australia.

During 1974/1975 negotiations are under way between Australia and Portugal to define the borders of such a rich area, although Australia is not very happy with the progress of those, well short of its expectations. Its ambassador in Jakarta reiterates in a cable dated 17/8/75:

"I wonder whether the department has ascertained the interest of the Minister or the Department of Minerals and Energy in the Timor situation. It seems 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."

The support given by the Australian Government on their meeting of 6-8 September 1974 means that after such meeting a decision is taken: East Timor has to be integrated with Indonesia, irrespective of the will of its people.

Curiously both that decision and its public knowledge precede the transformation of ASDT [Social Democrat Timorese Party] into a new and revitalised political party called FRETILIN [INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR Revolutionary Front], which only occurs a few days later on 11 September 1974. It also precedes the left turn in Portuguese politics that took place by the demise of President Spínola on 28 September 1974 replaced by General Costa Gomes, and the 11 March 1975 movement.

It is obvious that the radicalisation of East Timor political parties and the left turn in Portuguese policies (during the transitional period of the implantation of democracy in Portugal) serve the best interests of Indonesia to justify itself, in the eyes of the world, for the annexation of East Timor. The decision to do so is before those events, and based upon four fundamental questions:

- A) PANIC IN THE WESTERN WORLD AND IN ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA NATIONS) CONFRONTED BY THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN VIETNAM AND THE SUBSEQUENT NORTH-AMERICAN RETREAT OF WHICH THE FALL OF SAIGON IN APRIL, 30, 1975 IS A SYMBOL;*
- B) GEOSTRATEGIC REASONS LINKED WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF INDONESIA TO THE USA, AUSTRALIA AND THE WESTERN WORLD IN GENERAL;*
- C) ECONOMIC INTERESTS (MAINLY AUSTRALIAN) IN THE ENORMOUSLY RICH OIL BASIN OF THE TIMOR SEA;*
- D) INTERNAL NEEDS OF THE MILITARY REGIME OF INDONESIA, AND ITS 'HAWKS' TO CONSOLIDATE THE FRAGILE NATIONAL UNITY OF THE ARCHIPELAGO [WITH AUTONOMOUS MOVEMENTS DEMONSTRATING IN OTHER ISLANDS] THROUGH AN EXEMPLARY LESSON OF FORCEFULNESS OBTAINED BY AN INVASION FOLLOWED BY THE IMMEDIATE SUFFOCATION OF ANY EAST TIMOR REACTION.*

Unfortunately, the successive and ephemeral Portuguese Governments that follow (the unstable period after the April Revolution) do not oppose firmly, as they should, the Indonesian ambitions. Unable to know the cultural economic and political realities of East Timor they only defend the right to self-determination. The people of the territory are to choose their own destiny, without opposing any objections to the Indonesian integration if such is the freely expressed will of the people of East Timor. Placing an overwhelming trust that the Indonesian, as they often boast, will abide by this principle those Portuguese governments commit a far more tragic evaluation mistake than anyone predicts at the time. Indonesia puts forward its plan for the annexation, counting on the support of Australia, the compliance of the western world in general and the USA in particular, the understanding of the USSR ³⁶ and a not so strong opposition from Lisbon.

The first step is the destabilising of the territory, and to operate it General Suharto gives the go-ahead in October 1975 to 'Operasi Komodo' led by Generals Benny Murdani and Yoga Sugama, and Colonel Sugiyanto. Such operation includes the recruitment of East Timorese agents, fake propaganda by Radio Kupang and Radio Atambua on the Indonesian half of Timor and spreading through the official news agency ANTARA false and alarmist reports on the situation in East Timor. This operation will also focus on the softening of East Timorese political leaders with all sorts of promises and offers (later converted in pressure) as well as the radicalisation of local political parties through agents infiltrated from Indonesia.

³⁶ The PKI, Indonesia's Communist Party was smashed by Suharto in 1965/66 as being supported and allied with the People's Republic of China communist regime.

The second phase of this 'Operasi Komodo' to start in early 1975 will include a military preparation of the invasion when it is fully clear the almost absolute rejection by the East Timorese of any integration project with Indonesia. General Benny Murdani is the major architect of the preparation of the invasion of East Timor. On February 18, 1975, a simulated invasion is held at Lampung on the southern tip of Sumatra Island, allowing the preparation of the troops and sets the stage for the operation that will occur late that same year in East Timor. According to Australian analysts, the exercise - a total flop - helps delay the invasion of East Timor.

IV) THE CRISIS WORSENS

The crisis lurks again, or is this a side effect of the red carnations? The supply of the basic staples constituting the diet of the Timorese suddenly worsens. In a political session at the Dili Gymnasium with representatives of the M.F.A.³⁷ it is announced how important is to expel the Chinese from Timor because they are exploiters. As everybody knows the main trade routes are supported by credit obtained in the foreign markets of Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand. Due to the instability and a certain degree of alarmism, most of those creditors decide to withdraw their support to Timor, thus actually restricting all imports. The urge to procure and maintain in the external markets some trust and confidence in the feasibility of the political situation in East Timor is absolutely vital for its economic survival.

One has to remember that in the wake of the 2nd World War, it was proposed that Europeans and Timorese should concentrate their efforts in building up commercial ventures, as a form of limiting the supremacy of the Chinese traders and the initial investment was quite impressive.

Those ventures are of course short-lived and end systematically in bankruptcy. The hatred towards the Japanese is in a certain way extensive as well to the Chinese, in a typical attitude of distrust for all things oriental, so common with most colonising Empires. The result, of course, forces the local Department of Economy to assume the uncommon role of a trader, in a discriminatory way.

The distribution of food in government authorised outlets is subject to the socioeconomic status of the people, thereby the lower ranks of the civil administration are once more denied their basic rights and have to conform to very strict rationing.

Simultaneously, the colonial army, the civil servants of higher rank and all other civilians of European extract are able to purchase enough quantities of food supplies, under the badly disguised excuse that their presence in Timor is tantamount to that of saviours, hence they have to be properly fed.

The locals have to survive confining themselves to other sources of supply and continue to be grateful for their unprovided careers and the sheer lack of prospects of any advancement. If the rationing is visible for foodstuffs, it is a bit

³⁷ Portuguese Armed Forces Movement who spearheaded the April 25 revolution.

hard to understand how the Government decides to announce the purchase of a new aeroplane, to increase the operating capabilities of the local airline TAT [Transportes Aéreos de Timor]. The aircraft, an "Islander" with a passenger capacity of eight, thus increases to 26 seats the total capacity of TAT and a price tag of Esc. 5 600 000\$00 (approx. AUD \$175,000).

V) TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND POSTAL SERVICES

The new Head of the Provincial Telecommunications Department, Eng. Sampaio Rodrigues in a rare interview to the "V.T." declared:

"The telephone link within the territory is highly unacceptable. Back in 1972, it was tendered a new network for Timor. There were five tenders, the Japanese "Mitsui" and "Oki," the Portuguese "Standard Eléctrica" and "Plessey" and the Australian "Page." There was so much interest in favouring the Portuguese companies, that both "Mitsui" and "Oki" were immediately rejected because they did not submit all documents in Portuguese. Therefore, there was only the Australian firm "Page" left with a price tag of AUD \$437,500 dollars, to compete with the Portuguese. "Standard Eléctrica" submitted a bid with the value of AUD \$937,500 dollars, and "Plessey" bided for AUD \$687,500. It was obvious, then, that the best offer was the Australian, but all this became entangled in a mesh of bureaucratic problems, that would end in mid-1973 when Governor Aldeia under a proposal from the Head of Public Works decided to cancel the tender. Instead of having about 30 thousand telephone posts, rotten and falling to pieces, and telephone operators interrupting most phone calls, we might have in this month of September 1974, a fully automatic telephone network. When I saw the decision, in Lisbon, I replied to the Minister in charge of Timor [Eng. Abecassis]:

"Look, \$14 million Escudos (AUD \$437,500) is but a drop in the ocean, when compared with the total capital outlay for the road and aerodrome network of about \$500 million Escudos (AUD \$15.6 million), but my opinion was to no avail."

Later, the Japanese offer the total telephone network to be installed free of charge if the Government agrees on a concession for the future exclusivity of servicing. This proposal is from the Japanese Cabinet as a repayment of war damages. A delegation is even sent to Dili, but after the initial contacts, the deal fell through, because the Portuguese administration was not in a position to accept any Japanese offer.

Sampaio Rodrigues goes on:

"Back from Lisbon, the Governor realises that it is a serious mistake to have annulled the initial tender, and agrees to proceed with another one for the supply of a new UHF telephone network, to be implemented in separate phases. Again, the Australians from "Page" win, with a bid for the first phase with a total cost of 4.3 million Escudos (approx. AUD \$134,400) and 24 channels between Dili and Baucau to be installed in twelve months. Now the total capital cost of the telephone network, according to the lowest tender is no longer AUD \$437,500 but more than \$625,000..."

“As for the mail distribution, apart from the main cities, there are only 18 Postal Offices to which the mail is sent by barge, by plane, by military convoy, by truck and all other means of transportation you can think of. Even in Dili, there is no domiciliary postal distribution and only 200 GPO. boxes are available for the 25,000 inhabitants.”

Sampaio Rodrigues adds:

“Our revenue is only 75 percent of total expenditure, and our revenue always shows an annual loss, our staff has been working 45 hours weekly, plus overtime on Saturdays but since November 1973 they have not been paid such overtime because the Territory Budget does not have any allocation for such expenses. Previous studies indicated in 1968 that the Territory would need then about 800 telephones with expanding facilities for approximately ten years, but six years later we need already more than 1,800.”

As stated, the total lack of infrastructures is at the very core of all problems in Timor.

VI) ANTI-APODETI MOVEMENT - OR THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST TACTICAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN UDT AND FRETILIN

The representative in Timor of the M.F.A.³⁸ Major Arnao Metello leaves on official visit to Portugal after two stressing months opposing the Acting Governor, Níveo Herdade. The situation at the top level in the military ranks is pretty confusing because several high-ranking officers are sent into exile outside Timor because they allegedly take part in a mini-coup to oust the Acting Governor. Among those officers, a Lt. Colonel, some Captains, a Judge of the Civil Law Court and a few non-career officers, numbering about 25 people. It is a big purge of the higher ranks in such a small military community.

The ASDT Party meanwhile changes its name to FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor). In Jakarta, Reis Araújo, APODETI leader claims that his party for the integration of East Timor is being widely supported by the local people, and asks Indonesia to step up its efforts for that goal of integration. Of course, such widely publicised stunt receives a stern denial from the other parties. The communiqué from UDT states:

“UDT and its delegates have noticed through their visits throughout Timor, that the public support for an APODETI engineered fusion with Indonesia is practically non-existent, although APODETI claims to have 70 percent of support.”

“It is noteworthy remembering that Mr [Reis] Araújo is a person whose friendship with the Timorese people was well illustrated during the last World War, as a collaborator with the [Japanese] invader, who contributed a lot for the suffering of more than 100,000 victims of the Japanese.

“We deem important to remind other Timorese of the past actions of this APODETI leader. UDT appeals to the government of the Indonesian republic - a country that we respect and admire for its policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other territories - not to let it be influenced by the Machiavellian manoeuvres of Mr Araújo

³⁸ Armed Forces Movement.

and his cohorts. They do not represent the will of 600,000 other Timorese who can freely choose their future, without the intervention of international political backstage conspiracies. We hereby warn you all about APODETI and its leaders who pursue to take the Timorese people down the path of chaos, confusion, misery, and genocide. Long live Timor-Dili, down with the traitors.”

FRETILIN in its communiqué refuses to comment on the “*unqualified statements of Reis Araújo,*” and states some policy principles:

- i) We, defend the indefeasible right of all people to become independent.*
- ii) We, defend the blood of all patriotic brothers that for the past half millennium, have fallen victims to the colonial bullets, fighting for the liberation and independence of the Timorese motherland.*
- iii) We, repudiate all manoeuvres, opportunistic and more or less ‘democratic’ aiming at less than clear objectives.*
- iv) We do not tolerate and actively fight against any attempt to alienate the motherland to foreign powers, seeking the yoke of the people and the looting of their riches under the guise of ‘democratic’ theories.*
- v) We, incarnate the deepest aspirations of the Timorese people, and will not tolerate the continued oppression and exploitation of our people, after the independence.*
- vi) We reject all efforts of Mr Reis Araújo (in Indonesia) as leader of APODETI , which we can only consider as unqualified, only explicable in this rare case for the history of decolonisation as a manifestation of the most primary opportunism, capable of denying the creative powers of mankind, responsible for building up nations, conquering the outer space and for the most fantastic achievements on behalf of the human race”.*

As one can easily detect, there is a brand-new and florid speechwriter at work, now that ASDT has transformed itself into FRETILIN. These two communiqués mark the first time that both parties agreed on any subject.

VII) FRETILIN - A REVAMPED PARTY AND A REVAMPED NEW IDEOLOGY

The introduction to the political manifesto of FRETILIN has some brand-new ideas that many consider a plagiarism of the political manifesto of the P.A.I.G.C. (The unified political front for the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde). Let us follow such historical document, which will transfigure the local politics:

“Since one cannot admit the existence of a liberal form of fascism or democratic colonialism, it is absolutely absurd that any form of dependence, whether subtly or openly stated, might promote the progress of the territories or the freedom of people under colonial rule. It is factual, to consider that 500 years of Portuguese colonisation, created but the following human, socioeconomic, cultural and political panorama, of oppression and violation of the most basic human rights,

- a) a symbolic, derisory, humiliating and disrespectful gross income per capita, which is another proof of the unbridled exploitation;*
- b) an extremely high-level of illiteracy, revealing the discrimination and the predominance of the colonial policies pursued by the Portuguese administration;*

- c) *the cancerous and degrading corruption of the political and economic superstructures, benumbing any form of development;*
- d) *obsolete and anachronistic politico-administrative structures;*

It is therefore urgent to take one's stand, clearly, concisely, vigorously, and actively.

"Considering, that our motherland is in a decisive and grave moment of its history; Considering, that this moment demands action, responsibility, courage, generosity and formal clear decisions, or simply, conscientiousness;

Considering that it is important and opportune to act more militantly with the Timorese people, to help them achieve its liberation;

Considering these and other factors, the General Assembly of the ASDT, as an interpreter of the deepest aspirations of the people of East Timor and by virtue of that, declares itself as the only legitimate representative of its people and will be heretofore called FRETILIN Revolutionary Front for the independence of East Timor. The ideology behind our Front is based on the ASDT one and is now redefined as follows:

- I. *FRETILIN is a vanguard movement reflecting the deepest aspirations of the people, i.e., the thoughts, the feelings, and the willingness for the liberation of the East Timorese people.*
- II. *FRETILIN recognises the independence as only means of achieving the true liberation and progress of the East Timorese, to be consolidated with:*
 - a) *Total eradication of colonialism through:*
 - i) *Steep transformation of the decaying colonial structures with the implementation of new democratic ones based upon Social Democracy;*
 - ii) *Cultural development, based on new concepts, belongs to the people and the culture is for the people;*
 - iii) *Active fight against corruption and other forms of exploitation;*
 - iv) *Multiracial conviviality without distinction of religious beliefs;*
 - v) *Total rejection and repudiation of neo-colonialism and other forms of alienation to foreign powers.*
- III. *FRETILIN upholds the right to defend the peoples' infeasible right to independence and proclaims:*
 - a) *The immediate declaration of the "de jure" independence of East Timor.*
 - b) *The immediate decolonisation with simultaneous transfer of powers and change of structures as per 2a), to attain in the near future a "de facto" independence.*
 - c) *That only Portugal is recognised as a valid interlocutor for the bilateral agreements leading to the independence.*
- IV. *FRETILIN professes a policy of international cooperation, to be especially pursued in relation to Portugal, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, and all future countries of Portuguese language, also as with the countries of the geopolitical region to which Timor belongs.*
- V. *FRETILIN upholds the right to appeal to the United Nations Organisation to supervise and help with the formalities, concerning Decolonisation and Transfer of Powers preceding the "de facto" independence.*
- VI. *FRETILIN reserves the right of vetoing the members of the U.N. to be nominated to that Supervisory Commission.*

VII. *FRETILIN may appeal to all good willing nations and international organisations, to solve the pressing problems of East Timor in the social, economic, cultural and political fields. LONG LIVE TIMOR!*"

This is the surprising document that marks the transfiguration of ASDT under a scheme typical of PAIGC, FRELIMO³⁹, under the discreet orientation of some of its members recently arrived from Lisbon and the departure from political amateurism which threatens to provoke future reactions.

VIII) A LESSON ON HOW TO GOVERN THROUGH POLITICAL VISITING

The Acting Governor, Lt. Colonel Níveo Herdade during this eventful month of September [1974], decides to withdraw from the heated political climate of Dili, and accompanied by some Heads of Department and the Indonesian Consul visits Atambua, a coastal town, near the northern part of the border with East Timor. There, he is greeted by his Indonesian counterpart, the Governor-General of Nusa Tenggara Timur, Colonel El-Tari.

In his speech, Lt. Col. Herdade says that:

"Any decision regarding Portuguese Timor must be based upon the will of its people and must represent most Portuguese and Timorese people, freely expressed. So far, such expression of will has not been expressed, thus nobody is entitled to speak on their behalf. I respect very much the Timorese, who are not only those tens of thousands living in Dili. In terms of our relationship with neighbouring Indonesia, I believe that nothing should be done that might affect such neighbour, because I believe that as good neighbours we must understand each other in an atmosphere of mutual support, peace, progress and friendship."

Later in the month, Lt. Col. Herdade visits Viqueque on the east coast of Portuguese Timor, a renowned centre of disparaging cultural and ethnic differences. There, in a public speech, he says: *"The recently authorised freedom of speech cannot be used to condone or to instigate violence, neither the military nor the administrative authorities are permitted to take sides on the political spectrum, to avoid ideological pressures on the free will of the local population."*

It is worth reminding that, back in 1959 in this area started the infamous rebellion of Uato-Lari⁴⁰.

IX) INDONESIA ACKNOWLEDGES AND AGREES WITH THE INTEGRATION OF EAST TIMOR

Meanwhile, the papers are reporting Indonesian officials saying: **"the future of East Timor should not affect Indonesia's political stability."** The Foreign Affairs Minister, Adam Malik, interviewed in Jakarta admits that both Portugal and Indonesia have already agreed that the future of East Timor shall be decided by its people and that the replacement of General Spínola as Portuguese President will not alter the decolonisation of the Portuguese Overseas Territories to which independence has been promised.

³⁹ PAIGC, independent movement for the independence of Cape Verde, and FRELIMO its equivalent in Mozambique.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 1, 3. History

The Indonesian Interior Minister, Amir Machmun is quick to point out that Indonesia will oblige willingly if the Timorese people express their willingness to become part of Indonesia. The influential General Ali Murtopo, Head of the Secret Military Service, reveals that political organisations of Timor have already asked Indonesia to prepare for the reintegration [?] of the territory.

Simultaneously in Jakarta, the military newspaper “Berita Yudha,” considered by many to express a governmental opinion, publishes on the 27th September a virulent attack on two well-known Chinese traders of Dili: Jape Kong Su and Lay Kian Fun. According to the newspaper those two Chinese, following instructions from the Chinese Communist Party [of the People’s Republic of China] have financed a huge public demonstration of FRETILIN sympathisers in Dili on the 14th August, where a few thousand people express their support for that party. Those financiers totally repudiate the allegations and ask Dr Tomodok, the Indonesian Consul in Dili for a retraction. In another development the Governor-General, Lt. Col. Herdade receives in a private audience - whose outcome is never divulged - the Indonesian Bishops of Bali and Atapupo.

3. THE VISITATION

1) THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW “RELIGION”

The program of the impending visit by Dr Almeida Santos, the [Portuguese] Minister for Inter-Territorial Coordination, to the forgotten colony is publicised for the big event to take place on the 12 October. It anticipates meetings and audiences with heads of Department, with economic associations like ACAIT.⁴¹, with political and civic organisations, with Government delegates in companies like S.A.P.T.A. ⁴², as well as visits to Maubisse and to the Monument to the Massacred [2nd World War] in Ailéu. The Dili Municipality invites the public to concentrate in front of the Government Palace, and appeals for all commercial and industrial businesses to close their doors for the occasion. All this is too much reminiscent of the old style of public demonstrations, so common during the dictatorship.

The visit is postponed for one week, due to the inclusion of visits to Australia and Indonesia by Dr Almeida Santos, but nonetheless hundreds of people from the mountains accompanied by the traditional “Residents’ Companies” come down to Dili to receive the representative of the Portuguese Government. Dr Santos comes, one week later, accompanied by Majors Hugo dos Santos and Garcia Leandro, both members of the M.F.A. and the distinguished journalist [future Minister for the Culture] Dr Raúl Rego. Upon his arrival, at the airport of Dili, an emotional Dr Santos announces that:

“...Never before in my entire life, had I reasons to feel more proud of my motherland, than during this pilgrimage. I found 2,000 Portuguese words in the Indonesian language, 15,000 Portuguese workers in Sydney. “

The Mayor, during his reception to the Minister at the Festive Room of the Dili Municipality, delivers a historic and allegoric speech:

⁴¹ Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial Association of Timor.

⁴² Agricultural Society Motherland and Work.

“...The chivalrous, abnegation and loyalty of the Timorese people towards the Quinary Flag⁴³ for more than four centuries, attests our presence and gives us the right to continue to be Portuguese! It is a right that implies some obligations.”

The Mayor, César Mouzinho, a leader of UDT cannot miss a chance of propagandising his ideological tendencies, as so well he has learned in his days as a member of ANP ⁴⁴.

On his turn, Dr Almeida Santos addresses the Municipal Assembly in a poetic, historic and erudite manner that few are able to fully understand:

“...So strong were the roots implanted in the Timorese soil, so noble were the ideas and so valuable, that they resisted all threats, unhurt, a testimony of the Portuguese presence. When others tried to replace us through acts of military conquest, where we were by right of discovery, occupation and presence, many Timorese gave their lives instead of betraying their heart, and Timor continued Portuguese. In addition, may I add that it shall be perpetuated in the future as Portuguese, by its historical and cultural traditions and feelings? We want to make available a direct consultation of the people, in a climate of equality, freedom, legality, and order, and we will abide scrupulously by the results.

“Timor is not yet self-sufficient. It will be very hard to pretend we were here for the past five centuries to take advantage of Timor, we stayed here by vocation, by principle and by inclination. We never haggled in economical, technical, cultural and humanistic support to the population of Timor. Not always was colonialism an image of political oppression or economic exploitation

“I am told that among the political groups flourishing in Timor after the 25 April [Revolution], there is one that advocates total independence. Are we being realistic, when we radically propose the political disentanglement before Timor can achieve economic independence? We are well aware of the dangers of economical neo-colonialism. It comes surreptitious disguised as stamped paper and in subtle forms of investment. Moreover, it never leaves the shores.

“We believe that Timor must opt between deceptive prospects of immediate wealth and definite possibilities of future independence. That is where all the impatience and precipitation may become fatal. Then, is the moment for Portugal to come out as a natural ally, linked by feelings, a common language, and culture. Here we have geopolitical problems. History prefers evolution instead of discontinuity, and when a certain point of balance lies in five centuries of social stratification, or in its representation of values and feelings. It is a bit risky to send the people to the tailor of the future so that he can fashion a fantasy suit, in absence of such feelings and values.

“I do not wish to forget those who, in Timor, identify their happiness with a political connection with Indonesia. Such solution would be granted the validity of geographical considerations, and Indonesia is a noble country with brave

⁴³ Name traditionally given to the Portuguese national coat of arms, due to the five castles that are inscribed right in the middle of the national flag, representing the quick expulsion of the Moors in the first decades of Portuguese independence, and the five corners of the world discovered after that.

⁴⁴ The only legal party in Portugal during the dictatorship.

people. We are not pro or against, I somehow doubt that such could be in line with the pattern of decolonisation when there would be the replacement of one coloniser by another. We must go for the autonomy and not only the simple change of a coloniser by another. I believe - probably because we tend to believe in what we aspire for - that a vast majority of the Timorese wants to keep their links with Portugal. If such an aspiration were convened in a public referendum, there would be nothing more gratifying and honourable for Portugal and its government. From such a result, we would retain an obvious moral satisfaction. Timor will be what its people will want it to be.

“After the full legalisation of the political parties, we will publish a new electoral law, based upon the principle of one man - one vote, and the only thing yet to be decided is whether we are going to have an electoral census, or not. Meanwhile, those political groups will have defined their statutes and programs, defining their options for the future of the territory. We will allow time for a debating period and after that, we will proceed with a referendum under the United Nations auspices. Such referendum can be for or against the different theses advanced by the political parties or, merely for the election of a Constitutional Assembly to be in charge of drafting a future Constitution. Personally, I prefer this alternative. As for Australia, its interest lies in the balance and stability of this geopolitical region. Indonesia lacks territorial ambitions over Timor. They only ask that the decolonisation will not provoke ambitions that might risk the stability and peace in this area, where their political interests are at stake.”

Thus spoke, Almeida Santos, Minister for decolonisation. It is not known who gives him mandate to advocate, immediately after his arrival, theories of the feelings of the majority of the Timorese population, when such feelings and willingness are untapped. Moreover, how can anyone talk about decolonisation simultaneously with keeping the geopolitical stability in the region, if such stability is imperialistic, thus colonialist? Such are the mistakes of Almeida Santos, in this first attempt by Portugal to deal with the future of East Timor. The Timorese will tragically pay for, those mistakes. The ambiguity and double-talk of the Portuguese Minister will open sore wounds and reactivate ancestral hatred among the Timorese. During his speech, the public alternatively applauds or jeers.

Later, when receiving the tribal chieftains, Almeida Santos stresses his bias:

“I never had such a noble cause to defend in front of my Government, such is the value of your patriotism I had never believed that your faithfulness towards our flag and our motherland was as expressive as it is. I totally ignored that the absolute penury of the territory, as far as services and structures are concerned, instead of promoting rebellion only stressed your loyalty. We base our policies in the respect by the will of most of the people, whatever such will might be. If you want to continue linked to Portugal you will be, if not we will respect that option, although I am almost sure that such is not so. I leave convinced that your preference will be the perpetuation of that link.”

Dr Santos invites the Régulo [kinglet] Dom Gaspar Nunes to visit Portugal as a hero of his Portuguesism shown during the 2nd World War and the Japanese occupation of Timor. During his visit to Maubisse, in the mountainous interior of the territory, a local alderman says:

“The total abnegation of the Timorese, so proud of their Portuguese links in the borough of Ainaro, from Ainaro to Maubisse, Turiscaí and Hato-Builico, witnessed by so much Timorese blood, and represented by heroes like Dom Aleixo

Corte-Real and so many other anonymous people, who fell under foreign bullets because of their loyalty towards Portugal. Independence without Portugal will mean anarchy."

The Minister replies:

"I leave convinced that the true and genuine Timor lies here in the mountainous areas. I already knew the love of Portugal, the adoration of the flag. I ignored the religion that embodied such love. ¿May I assure all, that in Portugal, not a single person has ever thought of abandoning you? Timor is a phenomenon that sociology cannot explain. If like everything indicates, the public consultation of the Timorese people will show the tendency to keep political affinity with Portugal, as well as cultural and sentimental, we will be extremely happy and we will try to honour such a renewed secular pact."

One could imply that the Minister, seconded by Garcia Leandro, and the [very much disliked] Administrative Inspector Sousa Santos (sometimes defined as a political travelling salesman) have pre-established conveyed their ideas. [On the other hand, is he merely reinforcing them because of his visit?] Some people so deeply involved with the previous political regime are being legitimised in their perpetuation of the colonial regime, by the very same people who are supposed to represent the decoloniser. What kind of original decolonisation is this?

The supremacy of power of the ancient political brokers is being maintained. Traditional elites imposed by the Portuguese after the War, and faithful to them until the very last breath, are desperately trying to keep their status quo, as privileged representatives of the oppressed. Naively the part is being mistaken by the whole, and the vast majority of the more than 600,000 Timorese do not have a chance of expressing their free will, honestly and with exemption. Why then, recognise legitimacy to preordained majorities if the people on whose behalf so many are talking, have not shown their preferences?

In a hastily convened Press Conference, Almeida Santos would say that after talks with FRETILIN representatives he has already convinced them *"not to pursue the path of the "de jure" independence proclamation."* This, because *"there is no political independence without economic independence and because, such measure would provoke unjustified apprehension by Indonesia and Australia, who are trying so hard to preserve the political stability of the region."*

Upon his departure, at the airport, the Minister considers again the high visibility of the UDT party. In the meantime, representatives of the pro-Indonesian party (APODETI) salute him, amid chants for the unity of Timor with Indonesia as the 27th Province...

II) THE CHRISTIANS AND THE POLITICS OR THE FIRST RESULTS OF THE VISITATION

Oddly enough to be dismissed as coincidental, a group of Christians residing at the Motael - Lighthouse posh suburb of Dili, comes to public scrutiny with a manifesto stressing some possible political line of action for Timor. In that document, they applaud the positive points heralded by the new regime, such as:

"The restoration of freedom; higher responsibilities towards human dignity and human rights; and a climate of hope for the economic and cultural progress of the population, with prospective access to international organisations like the U.N. and UNESCO."

For those Christians:

"The negative outcome of the new regime is mainly concentrated on a series of attempts against the freedom, by people who think they have the exclusive right to the truth."

Equally, they criticise: *"attempts against the brotherhood of man that is responsible for the new atmosphere of distrust, hatred and misunderstanding similar to a racist upheaval; as well as attempts against children's dignity especially when forcing them to make political options that they are obviously unable to fully understand."*

Considering that the inhabitants of the Motael/Lighthouse suburb are exclusively Heads of Department, Senior Public Servants and high-ranking army officers, it is not very hard to guess who those "concerned Christians" are or what purposes could such a public manifesto serve.

4. OCTOBER 1974, LIFE AFTER THE VISITATION

I) THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT OR THE DEFICITS OF THE TRANSATLANTIC

During October the Government Delegate, acting Head of the Treasury divulges the new Budget for Timor, in which Portugal is providing an increased support to the local sources of revenue. The balance of payments is highly deficitary, with all fiscal revenue being a meagre 393 million Escudos (approx. AUD \$11,23 million dollars), of which 11,5 million Escudos (AUD \$360,000) were donations by Mozambique, Angola and Portugal, for an annual total expenditure of 390 million Escudos (AUD \$11,14 million). The expenditures of the public sector increase 176 percent in relation to the previous year. Lisbon is promising an extra subsidy of 70 million Esc. (AUD \$2 mill. for fiscal 1975. The public debt of the Territory is 844 million Escudos (AUD \$241,1 million).

II) OIL AND PROSPECTORS

Two tugboats normally operating on the offshore platforms of Woodside-Burmah Oil transport 200,000 litres of fuel during October, to counter the serious shortage of fuel in Timor, thanks to an offer from that oil company. It is noteworthy that during the first six months of 1974, BOCAL (Burmah Oil Company of Australia) uses East Timor as the basis for its prospectors on the Timor Sea, near Suai and Viqueque. BOCAL is a subsidiary of Woodside-Burmah Oil, who has signed an agreement with the Portuguese government for the prospection and exploration of oil and other hydrocarbonates in the maritime shelf, south of Timor. Two students from Timor are then invited to study under a special grant in Australia, to join the local operation in the future. The prospects for a permanently based offshore platform and wider prospectors is expected to start by early 1975, in what some government officials describe as a new source of employment opportunities for the Timorese youth.

III) THE M.F.A. (ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT) APPROVES THE NOMINATION OF THE NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL

On 29 October 1974, the Portuguese Council of Ministers and the Secretariat of the M.F.A. approve the new Governors for Macao and Timor, respectively, Major Garcia Leandro and Lt. Colonel Mário Lemos Pires. The latter has been in the difficult post of Commander-in-Chief of Guinea-Bissau before the Revolution and then transferred to the Army General Chief-of-Staff office as Chief Secretary to the Defence Minister, Col. Firmino Miguel. This is the man that will go down on the history books as the last Governor-General of Portuguese Timor.

IV) BEATING UP THE ANTI-FRETILIN DRUMS

The Commission for the Control of the Means of Communication meanwhile issues a communiqué regarding the radio program “Hac Soloc” produced by FRETILIN:

“On the 9 October, a telegram from Bobonaro was read by the delegates of that political organisation where it was mentioned that “students are anti-Communist, returning from new pro-Communist Portugal so the Federation with Portugal is dangerous and fatal.” Such telegram is alarmist and transfers some accusations against FRETILIN students to the Portuguese Government, thus doubting the honesty and seriousness of His Excellency the President of the [Portuguese] Republic and the President of the Cabinet of Ministers.

“Furthermore, on the edition of 16 October, on the same radio program broadcasting in the Bunác dialect, it is alleged that “the Timorese do not know-how to make a match or a needle. Who is responsible for that? Is it the Timorese? No, the culprit is the white man that has not developed Timor.” This is the gravest infraction since it foments racial attitudes that may explode into a climate of anarchy and violence, opposed by the program of the M.F.A. [Armed Forces Movement] and by the real interests of the peoples of Timor. Accordingly, this Commission decides to suspend such radio program [Hac Soloc] for a period of sixty days.”

As one can easily see the literal translation from some Timorese dialects could provoke situations like this, and the ever-ready Commission is always very keen on taking action, especially against FRETILIN. Worse alarmist statements in the program of UDT never deserved any punishment. At stake here, some factional propagandists of UDT and AODETI criticise some newly arrived students, who belonged to FRETILIN, of bringing with them the seeds of communism, so pervasive in the government of the day in Lisbon.

V) AIMLESSLY LOOKING FOR A KING, THE ROOK WAS THERE ALREADY

Totally unexpectedly a new political party is created, on the aftermath of the official visit of the Crown Prince of Portugal to Timor, Dom Duarte Nuno of Braganza (Bragança), heir to the Portuguese throne, whose last King Dom Manuel II was ousted in October 1910. He decides to play up some pro-royal pawns and goes on with a controversial visit to Timor, claiming that its extreme loyalty to the royal flag is something to contend with in the fight for its future. A few days after

such a royal visitor (or shall we call it princely?), the Timorese Popular Monarchical Association (APMT) is created under the following premises:

“Knowing the strong tendency of the Timorese to live under a monarchical form and style, it is proposed:

1. *The creation of a democratic monarchy, with characteristics similar to those truly democratic monarchies of the Far East and Europe;*
2. *Selection of a King, by election within local “Régulos” [kinglets];*
3. *To demand that the future King be well versed in the cultural, military and administrative fields, capable of assuring a true Executive for the people;*
4. *To demand that the King to be, has no factional political preferences to form a government based upon the free will of its subordinates;*
5. *To allow the formation of a Royal Council by all Régulos;*
6. *To fight for Timor to continue under Portuguese administration until all structures for autonomous rule and future independence are implanted;*
7. *To respect the [Portuguese] Republic and its laws;*
8. *To respect all mores and customs of local peoples;*
9. *To adopt the free import and sale of edibles that are the main staple of the population;*
10. *To respect the religious freedom;*
11. *To respect all political parties and movements, whose action may be of public interest, and since they respect mutual relations with all countries of the world, especially the neighbouring nations of Australia and Indonesia;*
12. *To promote hard working actions to promote the development of Timor via teaching brigades in the agricultural fields and other occupational fields;*
13. *To fight against movements or political parties who may jeopardise the internal security or the neighbouring nations;*
14. *To work without any remuneration on those actions, to help all APMT partisans, less favoured in the social and professional fields, to attain a standard similar to the developing nations;*
15. *To defend all democratic monarchical principles in all other countries.”*

This document is signed by the Organising Committee: Francisco António Dias Ximenes, Tomás Maria Ferreira Dias Ximenes, Guilherme dos Santos, Elias Cárceres, Floriberto Marçal. While these monarchists are looking for a new King, the rook is already there, definitely not playing chess. Roque [Rook] Rodrigues, a lawyer, ideological mentor of FRETILIN and member of its Politburo, arrives in Timor, after a stint of a few years in Portugal. He will soon become the main force behind the political spectrum of FRETILIN.

5. NOVEMBER 1974, THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE END.

I) FRETILIN IS TAKEN TO COURT

November, a very fateful month, starts with the public trial of eight members of FRETILIN, who allegedly took part in a rally, without a previous permission from the authorities. The political rally held at Bobonaro in the Central Mountains took place on November 13, 1974. As defendants Nicolau Lobato, quartermaster and Vice-President of the Central Committee; António Carvarino, director of the House of Timor in Lisbon; Abílio Araújo, member of the Central Committee; Vicente Reis; Guilhermina Araújo; Luís Araújo; Mesquita and Policarpo. The sentence is not swift, 15 days redeemable, suspended for two years. The court proceedings are extremely harmonious and the judge has some nice words for the President of the Central Committee of FRETILIN, Francisco Xavier do Amaral.

II) INFLATION SETS UP NEW PRICES

In an unprecedented measure, the Department of Economy fixes some maximum prices for public sale of foodstuffs:⁴⁵

Oysters, mussels and cockle:	Esc. 5\$00/kg. (AUD 15¢/kg.),
Lobster/crayfish:	Esc. 60\$00 (AUD \$1.70/kg.);
Prawns:	Esc. 40\$00 (AUD \$1.10/kg.);
First quality rice at Dili:	Esc. 9\$00 (25¢); Outside Dili: Esc. 8\$00 (23¢);
Beans:	Esc. 6\$00 (17¢);
Bananas and pineapples:	Esc. 8\$00 (23¢);
Cabbage:	Esc. 9\$00 (26¢);
Eggs:	Esc. 30\$00/dozen (86¢/dozen).

All other fruits, horticulture products and potatoes had free market prices.

III) November 18, 1974: A NEW BEGINNING OR THE CAVALCADE TO THE END?

November 18 is the day that signals the arrival of the last colonial Governor of Portuguese Timor and simultaneously its last Commander-in-Chief, the Colonel Lemos Pires. At the airport for the reception, the then Acting Governor, Lt. Col. Níveo Herdade stresses the crises affecting Timor:

“Rationing of fuel oil, high increases in the cost-of-living, difficulties and lack of proper transportation facilities, alarmist gossiping originated in minorities, lack of edibles, lack of infrastructures, lack of technical cadres, export of currency, black-marketing.”

The new Governor exhorts the mainland Portuguese, whether conscript or not:

“To avoid interfering with the political process, under moral grounds. To decolonise is not to abandon, it is a means of achieving peace, no uneasiness. The Armed Forces have to act as umpires, exempt, guarantors of security and

⁴⁵ All prices mentioned throughout the book are at the then currency exchange of Escudos 25\$00 to 32\$00 for AUD \$1.00. The average monthly salary of a Timorese was around AUD \$10.00 in the city.

tranquillity all opinions will be accepted if they do not serve neo-colonialism but instead they are representative of the true interests of Timor.”

The new cabinet is composed of

- Major Queiroz Martins BARRENTO, General Chief-of-Staff of the Independent Territorial Command of Timor, who has already served in Timor between 1968 and 1970;
- Major Francisco Fernandes da Mota, Chief of Cabinet for Political Affairs and Special Assistant to the Military Cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief, who also served in Timor between 1968 and 1970;
- Lt. Col. José Angelo Teixeira de MAGALHÃES, Military Commander-in-Chief of Timor;
- Major Adelino Rodrigues COELHO, Head of the Military Cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Governor’s Cabinet, trained by the US and the Brazilian Army;
- Dr Libânio Pires, ex-Secretary-General of Guinea-Bissau and member of the Committee for the Decolonisation of Guinea-Bissau during the presidency of General Spínola;
- Major Silvério Henrique da Costa JÓNATAS, responsible for the Social Communication Media) portfolio.

After inviting the Head of the Supply Battalion and the author, who both turn down the job, the new Governor has as its first official act to install in office, the new Head of the Economy Department, Major Alberto Simões RIOS, from whom is expected the solution of impending problems like the supply of basic foodstuffs, the restructuring of commercial trade, the restocking of edibles, and regularisation of trade between Timor, Portugal and Mozambique.

After being installed, the new Governor-General has meetings with representatives of the three major political parties, UDT, APODETI and FRETILIN, to whom he explains the mainstream policies of the decolonisation process that he will enforce. An active group of workers of the Building Industry meets with a representative of the Cabinet for Political Affairs to discuss the formation of a class trade union. It must be remembered that no unions are legal in Timor.

Lemos Pires in his first meeting with representatives of employers, at the head office of ACAIT⁴⁶ announces that “the exodus of reserves and currency is tantamount to treason.”

Mentioning the lack of external credit facilities and the extreme dependence of Timor on exports, the Governor qualifies this as the main reason for high inflationary prices. In relation to the biggest employer, S.A.P.T.A.⁴⁷, Lemos Pires stresses the importance of maintaining the Government’s Delegate, Major RIOS (Head of the Dept. of Economy and Prices).

This is a very controversial issue since Major RIOS is by renowned as Army Officer always-engaged in civil activities where he perceives higher remuneration apart from the chance of constant trips overseas. For some people, this warrants some discredit for the new government, but it has to be admitted that some improvement in the economic front comes because of Major RIOS activity.

⁴⁶ Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial Association.

⁴⁷ Agricultural Society Motherland and Work.

Major Mota pronounces the Labour Party of Timor (PTT) and the Popular Monarchical Party of Timor (PPMT) as lacking representativeness and as political groups who did not even bother to present themselves to the new Governor. The Chief of Cabinet for Political Affairs announces that a list of future members of the Government Council is already being prepared. Also in the pipeline, a project for the new Constitutional Statute, being written by the High Court Justice Valadas Preto, the highest judiciary member of Lourenço Marques in Mozambique, who is acting as a representative of the Minister for the inter-territorial Coordination.

The new cabinet does not lose any time implementing new rules. The most controversial is the scrapping of the working hours from 7 to 1 p.m. and the introduction of a second daily period of work, from 3 to 5 p.m. Among the first new measures introduced by this apparently, very active team is a new project for the Radio Broadcasting Station; new regimentation for housing and use of official cars and the start of regular air links between Lisbon and Dili by Portuguese Air Force planes (Boeing 727).

The Governor meanwhile is very busy visiting Ailéu, Maubisse, Nuno Tali, the new roads Dili - Baucau, already completed up to Fatu-Ahi, and the new airport at Madohi (Tacitolu) in Dili. All long service leave requests are frozen, for public servants and members of the army.

The new Governor of Portuguese Timor upon arrival starts a systematic decolonisation process in anticipation of future medium-term self-determination. Supporting a proposal from FRETILIN, well accepted by UDT, of having a coalition of the two major political parties, he presides over what is supposed to become after January 20, 1975, a drive for independence between 5 to ten years away. This political posture and other measures designed to install moderation and serenity in the territory are seen as unwelcome by the Indonesian authorities that harshly criticise them. The constant provocation of Radio Kupang and Radio Atambua is heightened during this period.

Amid these activities by the new Governor-General and his team, it is totally unnoticed the formation of "Operasi Komodo" under Major-General Ali Murtopo, to take charge of East Timor matters. In addition, in the military field, a new battalion of the Military Police arrives in Timor. Later, thanks to the active involvement of this group in political matters, it will be dubbed "The Red Company."

Meanwhile back in Lisbon, the confusion about the future of the colony is only comparable to the lack of interest in its future. The Prime Minister Dr Mário Soares declares his willingness to grant independence, while Dr Almeida Santos recently arrived from Timor, emphasises that the ministers in charge of Foreign Affairs in Indonesia gave assurances of non-intervention on the future of the colony. Just a few days later an Indonesian delegation is adamant in stressing that their country will only accept two possible solutions for East Timor: "***The continuation of the links with Portugal or, the integration in Indonesia.***"

Ignored by everybody, and kept secret until 1981, is a meeting held by Ali Murtopo, with the major political forces of the

new Portuguese regime. On October 14 in Lisbon, the then President Costa Gomes, the Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves, and the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Dr Jorge Campinos have a secret meeting with Ali Murtopo, Head of the Indonesian Secret Service. During such meeting, the *real* Indonesian version on East Timor is clarified: ***“Portuguese Timor will be either Portuguese or Indonesian. No third options.”***

The Portuguese Government while agreeing in broad terms with the Indonesian position, stresses the need to re-establish diplomatic links at ambassadorial level between the two countries, and vents all possible alternatives for the colony. Dr Almeida Santos has a meeting with Ali Murtopo in Lisbon before visiting Timor, and according to some sources ⁴⁸, this is the reason why his visit is delayed from the 11th to the 18 October. Murtopo has arrived in Lisbon, immediately after the leftist General Costa Gomes, what increases Murtopo’s dislike of the new regime, replaces General Spínola.

In the Lisbon meetings, Major Arnao Metello [the representative of the new regime in Timor, who is considered as a sympathiser of Indonesia, based upon the “historical rights sic of Indonesia over East Timor”] accompanies Dr Campinos [State Secretary for Foreign Affairs].

Among the political acts of the new Governor-General Lemos Pires, one can mention the creation of a Coordinating Committee composed of military officers to implement the policies of the M.F.A. locally. Such Committee has the participation of both career army officers and the conscripted ones - the so-called militia officers. Teams of political officers are nominated to propagate the new regime throughout Timor, in public sessions of political indoctrination.

6. DECEMBER: THE FIRST STEPS INTO SELF-DETERMINATION

I) FRETILIN LOOKS FOR OUTSIDE SUPPORT

In the beginning of December, FRETILIN leader José Ramos Horta, announces his impending visit to Australia thanks to an invitation of the Southern African Liberation Centre and the newly-formed [Australian] Campaign for Independence of East Timor (CIET). From the agenda, there are scheduled meetings with the Prime Minister (Gough) Whitlam, the Acting Foreign Minister (Don) Willesee and Andrew Peacock of the Opposition, as well as with MP’s and senators, leaders of the Trade Unions (including a certain Bob Hawke) and foreign ambassadors. There is also a project of a visit to Port Moresby, capital of the Australian Papua New Guinea, going through the decolonisation process envisaged to lead briefly to the independence of that autonomous colony.

II) A CONSCIENCE TODAY, A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH TOMORROW

Under the suggestive heading of “A conscience today, a force to be reckoned with tomorrow,” the newly-formed APMT

⁴⁸ The sources are plenty:
 Jill Joliffe in "Expresso" (17 Oct. 1981),
 Hamish McDonald in "Suharto's Indonesia", Fontana 1980,
 Yayasan Parikesit in "Integrasi" ed. Soekarno, Jakarta 1976,
 Michael Richardson "Why Timor talks upset Indonesia", Sep. 75

[Timorese Popular Monarchical Association] publishes another manifesto:

1. *Considering that after the Manu-Fahi⁴⁹ rebellion the prestige inherent to the Régulos was swiftly taken away by the colonialist;*
2. *Considering that preceding the arrival of the Portuguese seamen, Timor was divided into different kingdoms;*
3. *Considering that Timor is today what it is thanks to the Portuguese [Roman Catholic] missionaries...*
11. *Considering that the ones who got aggrieved by the colonialist were the descendants of the Régulos who sheltered the first Portuguese monarchists who landed on these shores; APMT salutes the Portuguese people for the hospitality and conviviality enjoyed during the past five centuries, and in a special salute to the Timorese peoples from Citrana [Oé-cusse Ambeno] to Jaco hereby manifests its intent of:*
 - 1) *Restoring to the genuine Régulos the prestige they hold until the Portuguese arrival and the Manu-Fahi rebellion;*
 - 2) *Creating another democratic monarchy in the Far East;*
 - 3) *Accepting all ideological aggression, wherever they may come from, without rebuttal but only elucidating the people of its rightful position;*
 - 2) *Creating a nation of lusiad⁵⁰ expression with oriental characteristics;*
 - 2) *Defending the Human Rights Bill as approved by the United Nations;*
 - 2) *Defending the administrative links with Portugal, until Timor reaches its economic and political maturity;*
 - 2) *Maintaining its confidence to dignify the people [of Timor] according to the historical responsibility of Portugal, under the five centuries pact; only with a single will and power exemplified by the historical responsibility of the Portuguese people and the capabilities of the Timorese people, can we dignify the people and attain the realisation of the ideals of the APMT.*
 - 9) *Nevertheless, the founders of this Association, as descendants of the Régulos and from ancient times, carry the burden of the responsibility of the colonial practice in Timor."*

We believe no comments are needed in relation to this magnificent piece of prose.

III) DECOLONISATION ACCORDING TO ALMEIDA SANTOS

The Portuguese Minister for Inter-territorial Coordination, Dr Almeida Santos in his speech to the United Nations' General Assembly lays down the rules that his country follows in the decolonisation process:

"The recognition of the right of the peoples to self-determination and to independence; stern resolve in defending non-racial societies and vehement condemnation of all forms of political discrimination, namely of the 'apartheid'; recognition of the historical role of the U.N., its norms, its charter, its principles and resolutions; recognition of the International Declaration of the Rights."

When referring to Timor, Almeida Santos states:

"There are three currents of opinion. Timor is still very far away from self-sufficiency in economic terms, which

⁴⁹ Rebellion of 1959 at Uato Lari, as mentioned before.

⁵⁰ From the Lusitanian, the ancient tribes of Iberian Portugal who opposed the invasion by the northern gothic tribes of the Sueves, Visigoths, Goths and other Barbarians.

preclude thoughts of real independence. During 1974, Portugal injected more than 300 million Escudos (approx. AUD\$ 8.6 mill.) and that was not enough. The more I go back in time, the harder it is to find more than the moral satisfaction of our presence. If we combine that with the state of underdevelopment of the Territory, it is easy to conclude how fantastic is the dream of a total and immediate independence.”

The weekly “V.T.” comments on Almeida Santos rhetoric:

“The Minister came here. We were told he came to sound out the people. How? With preordained ideas? We are told, and it seems that the local Government spent millions of Escudos (tens of thousands of dollars) to stage a play, to make belief in a certain scenario. Such staging was very typical of the era before the 25 April. Has he taken it seriously? So it seems. So it shows his speech at the United Nations. Who is going to foot the bill? Was it a hurried assumption by Almeida Santos? The reactionary forces might even benefit from it.”

By the second time in a row, the prices register very steep rises, up to 30 percent during December. The Governor-General visits Maubara, during the celebrations of the centenary of the birth of the hero Régulo Dom José Nunes, where his son and Régulo Dom Gaspar Nunes present an elocution, of vibrant partisan fervour during which he states: “I am not sure whether UDT took on my ideas or whether I took on theirs . . .”

IV) THE MONARCHISTS ENLIGHTEN THE DECOLONISATION PROCESS

Tomás Dias Ximenes the Secretary-general of the recently formed PPMT gives an interview that must be remembered as the basis for future studies in politicking:

“We, the Popular Monarchists bless the colonialism. I bless the colonialist, simply because I remember a Catholic Hymn related to the original sin of Adam and Eve. It says “Mea culpa” and a happy one that is because God gave the world His own son to redeem the human beings and to elevate them to gods. Similarly, because of the colonialism, we are now benefiting of democratic freedom because all major leaders of the Timorese parties have been seminarians, I attribute it in my very own case, to the love we devote to our traditions and the traditions of our forebears. We may not have History but we do have oral traditions. If a communist party will establish itself in Timor, we will be endangered since the territorial stability will be affected and we might suffer an Indonesian invasion.

The tragedy of 1965 is still very vividly implanted on the memory of us all. Within the framework of a monarchy, we will accept all political creeds but the communists.

We have a genuine oriental culture, and I mean by that a culture, mores and customs so traditionally typical of the people of East Timor. We defend the maintenance of administrative links with Portugal under a Federation, as UDT does. UDT prefers the maintenance of exploitation under one nation Portugal and Timor where the natural reserves can be exploited without popular critic or objection, as for us, APMT, we prefer to accept an administrative link until we have the necessary infrastructures to get self-determination and independence and that is our major

difference with UDT.

For more than 400 years missionaries and merchants of sandalwood have been undressing Timor of its forests, of its natural riches and its tropical woods. They brought coffee to compensate for the lack of sandalwood. The President, as the voice of the Portuguese people, declared to the world how "high was the responsibility of Portugal to its overseas peoples" and he cannot renege on it, after broadcasting those words through the radio and television waves, all the world now knows about such promise.

We have some relation with the Portuguese Popular Monarchical Party [PPM] because when the monarchy was ousted [in 1910] the Timorese Régulos of 1912 tried to preserve the monarchy in Timor. We want to preserve that dream of Dom Manuel de Same and Dom Boaventura, those two Régulos whose faithfulness genuinely monarchical forces us to have and preserve those links with the PPM. The idea of forming a monarchical party came after having consulted with the traditional leaders of the island. I may assure you that even if we had not done any political indoctrination campaigns, we know-how well accepted we are because we are traditionalists.

"The biggest problem we have to face is the election of a new King. We see now some kingdoms that are not more than the conglomeration of different souks⁵¹. If a Régulo can join different 'souks' under the same kingdom, a King may as well unite under a single nation all the different kingdoms of Timor. The King to be elected freely by the people of Timor, apart from being capable in terms of administrative, military and cultural knowledge, of guiding them to their destiny, must be a Régulo or descending from one since immemorial times. We have not started campaigning for the people, because we, the descendants of the Timorese Régulos are the most aggrieved ones by the colonialism. If the government sponsors UDT and FRETILIN with a monthly subsidy of Esc. 50 000\$00 [AUD \$1,428.00] for them to pursue their political interests, we believe we should receive an equivalent amount because our mission and our work are for the people and by the people."

Meanwhile, the general opposition to the new working timetables is rampant with UDT leading the way. Tractor drivers benefit from its implementation to have higher salaries, thus reducing any possible profits. In the public sector, in general, there is a very low productivity case being argued against the introduction of afternoon work. One can call it working by the book.

V) THE TIMORISATION OF THE ARMY

In a speech to the population in mid-December, Lt. Col. Lemos Pires addresses some very important issues. From his speech, we extract a milestone for the future of Timor:

"To consolidate the internal security [of the Territory] one has to restructure the Armed Forces, as we already started doing. Such [restructuring] has been done within parameters involving confidence and trust in the Timorese soldiers,

⁵¹ 'Souk' or Suco the Portuguese term has been alternatively used throughout this work. The word originates from Arabic and in its original sense means a small village, or a place inhabited by a small group of people under the direct jurisdiction of a local chieftain, or elder, thus 'Head of Suco'.

budgetary restrictions and the redeployment of the metropolitan [mainland Portuguese] Army ranks in actions of technical support and formation of new cadres.”

Eight months later, a bloody fight will be ravaging the colony, precluding a short-lived civil war. After it starts, it is obvious that the roots of the problem can be traced back to the dissemination of sectarian ideals in a “Timorized army.” This leads to the disintegration, thus provoking sectarian scission within the ranks of the army. As far as the formation of new military cadres, engineered by the Portuguese military brass, it must be reminded that almost all the “selected” Timorese officers are sympathisers of FRETILIN.

So, we have a very vocal support to UDT, culminating with the visit of Dr Almeida Santos, and then after November 1974, campaigns of political indoctrination ideologically parallel to FRETILIN political programs. The dichotomisation that will split the “atmosphere of peace and tranquillity” so often praised by Lemos Pires, is being brought from the administration’s approach to the future political backbone of the Territory. Referring to the political parties, which are being legalised, the Governor-General states that:

“They have shown a very strong cooperation and high conscience of the realities. We cannot allow demagoguery, the invitation to violence, or any form of pressure over the population because that would inevitably take away from them, the freedom of choice needed to exercise their rights. As far as decolonisation is concerned the colonial administrative system, must be replaced, as soon as possible, by a democratic regime of responsible, autonomous entities the traditional leaders on whom the vast majority of structures of the mountain people rely, will maintain their positions and obligations. We will not tolerate despotism their responsibilities is now much bigger. To decolonise implies the eradication of colonial mores and norms and there will be no place in Timor for those who are not willing to immediately adhere in spirit and in action.

“When we introduced new working hours to improve efficiency and productivity we did not expect the lack of interest and the self-indulgence that the population would subsequently show, it is the time that people in Timor realise that without work there is no progress. How can people march towards their autonomy if they are not willing to work to achieve that? The political situation and the gradual worsening of the world economy have generated in Timor a climate that favours inflation and economic speculation, so we will be implementing a new policy of economic stability to freeze prices and wages.”

Later that month [December 1974], Lemos Pires will tell the soldiers at Lospalos on the eastern coast, “to avoid sectarian options to safeguard the future of Timor.” The prices continue to rise, and in the field of transport, the hike exceeds 100 percent during the year. The cost of diesel fuel comes to \$AUD 20¢/litre, super to 30¢, low octane petrol 27¢ and fuel oil 23¢/litre.

VI) FRETILIN HAS A NEW POLITICAL HANDBOOK: THE WORDS TO TOIL REVOLUTIONS

Following the increasing influence of the more radical five university students who come from Lisbon in September to

join the FRETILIN Secretariat, this party publishes before the end of the year a new political booklet where all previous manifestos are condensed and rephrased. It reads strongly activist and its wording is definitely revolutionary:

1. *FRETILIN unites all nationalist and anti-colonial forces in a common objective: to free the people from the colonial yoke through peaceful means to progress and freedom, repudiating all forms of colonialism or neo-colonialism.*
2. *FRETILIN is a Front because it opposes all divisive manoeuvres. The experience of our ancestors in their plight for liberation at Camenasse, Cova, Cotubaba, Lacló, Ulmera, Manu-Fahi and Viqueque taught us all that it is imperative to unite all nationalists and anti-colonialists against those who use the motto "to divide to rule". Timor is still a colony. Our main objective is national independence and the liberation of the people. The existence of different parties with distinct political programs can only be justified in an independent country, in a colony serves only to debilitate the people, dividing it and thus allowing for its domination.*
3. *FRETILIN is Revolutionary because to obtain the true liberation of the people one must modify, transform, and revolutionise the old structures inherited after five centuries of colonialism. Without it, the Timorese people will never be truly independent.*
4. *Independence is the only way to the real progress and development of the people of East Timor. No people can realise its aspirations and defend its interests unless they are masters of their destiny. The right to become independent is universally recognised and cannot be dismissed or denied.*
5. *A true independence can only be achieved through:*
 - a) *The fight against colonialism, replacing the foreign political power [Portuguese] with the Timorese, and subsequently modifying administrative and political structures;*
 - b) *Modifying, transforming and revolutionising the socioeconomic colonial structures;*
 - c) *Actively preventing neo-colonialism, when the State is independent but its people are not free to manage their destiny. This happens when the influx of foreign investment and the application of foreign capital do not serve the legitimate interests of the people and create its own economic dependence.*
6. *FRETILIN pronounces itself the only legitimate representative of the people of East Timor because:*
 - a) *At this very moment, the people of East Timor are every anti-colonialist and nationalist willing to fight for the true independence of East Timor;*
 - b) *Only FRETILIN defends as a priority an agriculture to serve the people; the culture of the Timorese people; an education system to serve the people; and a health system to serve the people.*
7. *FRETILIN says NO to the Federation scheme with Portugal, because it defends the people of East Timor, and cannot ignore that the Portuguese presence can only maintain the colonial economic structures, benefiting the interests of a minority (small and colonialist), thus reinforcing their economical clout instead of contributing to the general wealth. Portugal, thanks to its geographical location and its underdeveloped economy cannot continue for much longer, as a strong and secure ally, unless its minority representatives in East Timor join forces with the imperialist capital to protect their interests and exploit the Timorese people. An economy based upon exports will asphyxiate the agricultural subsistence now practised in Timor with two or three products. Once such type of agricultural dependency is predominant, Timor will have to depend on the external markets to import everything from prime materials to secondary ones. Such is the type of neo-colonial dependency we want to avoid, altogether with a*

national anthem and a flag.

8. *FRETILIN says NO to integration because it believes in the people of East Timor and realises that it is the only force that can become the blood of a nation. Only those who do not trust this people, whose confidence is eroded and do not believe in its creativity can accept the idea of integration. We would like to show you the racism that the idea of integration implies when some believe in the superiority of other people to justify their domination of others. FRETILIN believes that the East Timorese can make their History as other peoples have done to achieve the progress of independence and freedom. We believe that the East Timorese have enough capabilities to govern themselves.*
9. *When we mention a type of agriculture devoted to the people, we mean a diversified production capable of improving the diet of the people and fighting against hunger. During the colonial regime, agriculture was only devoted to the export of specialised products. In East Timor that meant coffee, copra, rubber, and vanilla with a total lack of interest in all other cultivation, that might serve the needs of the people. Such type of exploitation of the soil leads only to famine in its two most well-known forms: qualitative hunger due to the lack of variety, only rice or corn or cassava; quantitative hunger due to lack of items of basic staples. When the situation worsens, since hunger is a permanent state of affairs during colonial times, everything is missing and the very few products are extremely expensive. This also applies to imported products, and since the people are poor, they have to live in misery because the agriculture produce is not there to serve the people.*
10. *FRETILIN wants to protect the agriculture since we are a country of peasants and our people lack foodstuffs. It is important to feed and satisfy their basic needs. It is imperative that people can eat what is available without fear, without fearing for the days to come. After five hundred years of unbridled exploitation, we were given hunger, sickness, and misery.*
11. *An education system addressed to the people leads to its liberation, helping it to participate actively in the life of a nation; whilst a colonial teaching is totally inarticulate because it imposes realities that are not commonly shared, like the History and Geography of Portugal, and because it forces a sense of patriotism based upon Portugal.*
12. *FRETILIN wants its people to be literate, so that the liberation may be complete to enable everybody to participate in the government of the Timorese nation. We can no longer afford an ignorant population ready to be exploited. We need all people ready to know what they want and why. We want to make politics easily accessible for all instead of being the sole feud between Doctors and PhD's. It is imperative that the people be instructed so that it can demand the solution for its problems instead of being exploited and conned. The high-level of illiteracy that pervades us is a hindrance to the development of our culture. How can we develop our literature, our poetry, if these are the expression of the people and the people cannot read? How many values of our culture were lost just because we have to rely on oral tradition? Such values are normally transmitted from parents to children, but the human memory is somewhat limited and many of those traditional values were lost forever. It is imperative that all can read and write. FRETILIN is going to start immediately a literacy campaign with studies capable of liberating our people of 500 years of obscurantism. We will teach them about the principles we defend, thus stimulating a democratic participation in the government of our Nation.*
13. *FRETILIN considers very importantly the sanitary education of our people because we all have to know the*

elementary rules of hygiene. We all have to know-how to deal with wounds, with our children, with our elders and we should also know the nutrient values of our foodstuff, so that our diet may become rich, varied, healthy and fortifying.

14. *FRETILIN will adopt the Portuguese language as the official language. We cannot adopt immediately the "Tetum" dialect because although still very widespread in its use by our people, it has not evolved since we were first colonised. Despised, maligned and forbidden it could not keep its pace with world evolution. Many words do not exist and others we do not know. It is important that the philologists concentrate on studying our language to be adopted by us in the future. We selected a foreign language, and it was easier to prefer the Portuguese since it is already spoken."*

VII) TO MISLEAD THE ALWAYS MISLED PEOPLE

It is obvious by now, that large numbers of Timorese on the neighbouring areas of Ermera, Atsabe and Balibó are seeking refuge in the Indonesian half of the island, to avoid the factionalism and the radicalisation of the major political groups.

The Governor-General, Lt. Col. Lemos Pires decides to pay a visit to those frontier villages to calm the population. Using a very simple language that can be easily understood by all, Lemos Pires says:

"Nobody shall mislead the people because the population have a right to live in peace the Army is here to defend the peace. I know that at Atsabe people are trying to allure you to go to Indonesia. Why do you need to go there? Do not you have freedom in Timor? Why do those people entice others to go to Indonesia when they will be starving there? Those who want to have war are not from Timor and do not defend the best interests of Timor. These people who want the war will be punished, the Governor is not afraid of them, the Army is not afraid, the Army is here so that people will not be afraid, those who fear are traitors."

The exodus of the border villagers, numbering over a thousand men and boys (the women were left behind) originates in a campaign of alarmist rumours and confusion spread by APODETI (the pro-integration party) who lures them by promising large amounts of sugar (an item in permanent shortage) or transistorised radios (luxury article) that represented the utmost aspiration of ownership for many mountainous people.

The biggest group of people involved in this migratory movement leaves the women behind to take care of their possessions, but a minority moves the entire family and household belongings. In the rumourous atmosphere lived there, many are believed to go for military training in guerrilla warfare so that later they will come back ready to fight. This will be extremely well documented in September 1975, but now it is no more than another unsubstantiated rumour.

One must point out, that Lemos Pires is the first high-ranking officer to have the guts to acknowledge the problem in the border region. Everybody knows it is happening and spreading but for fear of changing the balance of power between all local political parties, the military brass has decided to keep the lid on and hope it will go away. Such decision by the new Governor is very welcome in Timor because it proves a new feeling of the overture in contrast with the generalised

colonial inertia of the local elites.

Some people think that the fruits of Revolution [25 April 1974] are finally arriving at Timor. Rumour has it that the Revolution has been exported from Portugal in a sailboat and that is the reason why it takes so long to materialise.

Initially, the new cabinet has a working rhythm that is a good presage of the decolonisation, without paternalistic neo-colonialism disguised under false patriotic allegiances or newly invented religions of the flag, as happened when Dr Almeida Santos visited the island the previous October. Generally, the new government creates a climate of expectation and confidence, with most people believing in a peaceful transition to whatever kind of future will be reserved for Timor.

The main political parties UDT and FRETILIN are moving smoothly now, although FRETILIN, after the change of name [from ASDT] and the publication of its new policies, is seemingly more attractive. This is more perceived in the large numbers it has from the literate youth, in its pursuit of liberation from an apparently non-repressive colonial system, but a very inhibiting and conditioning one.

On the other hand, UDT reinforces its top political echelon through new adherents from the decadent colonial administration. The Régulos, Liurais, and Heads of Souk can obey them (through mere exercise of their positions in the local hierarchy).

The third contender, APODETI, can only rely on its campaigns of misinformation and economical subversion: offering transistorised radios to pretend a pseudo-socioeconomic promotion of its members and promising them with unlimited supplies of sugar if they moved to Indonesian Timor.

VIII) THE FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE CABINET

In the days preceding Christmas, the new cabinet decides to hold a Press Conference - something unheard of in colonial Timor - where the four most influential members of the new government are present: Major COELHO, Head of the Military Cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief; Major Caldas, his deputy; Major Mota, Chief of Cabinet for Political Affairs and Special Assistant to the Military Cabinet; Major JÓNATAS, responsible for the Information and Social Communication portfolio.

Some of the startling statements produced in such a Press Conference are recorded here, as a departure from the political blandness of previous administrations of this colonial backwater:

“It is public knowledge that in the black market the Australian dollar is often traded at 55\$00 Escudos when its official rate of exchange is only Esc. 32\$00, this represents a major form of capital flight. The replacement of a typically colonial political and administrative system by local and municipal forms of management will provide for a participation of the culturally more evolved population strata, which will be, in some specific cases, elected to perform such duties. We will change the local authorities, based upon one person one vote, for a collegial authority or a municipal council duly elected

by the local population.”

Statements by Dr Almeida Santos in the General Assembly of the United Nations and later on the [Portuguese] National Broadcaster “E.N.” provoke the ire of the Timorese Government who decides to ask for a clarification of those statements, but two weeks after - [22 December] - has yet to receive a reply from the Lisbon Government.

In addition, the press conference goes on to state that:

“In some meetings held by Army Officers it is democratically approved the institutionalisation of the M.F.A. [Armed Forces Movement] in Timor, composed of the following branches:

- *Committees of Political Elucidation and Welfare on each military unit;*
- *Sectorial Councils grouping all the units belonging to each military sector;*
- *The Military Council of Timor; and,*
- *The Coordinating Committee of the M.F.A. to liaise with the Commander-in-Chief of the Territory.”*

In fact, the most important single statement is the one concerning the establishment of new units of power at the local administrative level. This is a sudden departure from the ancestral local power of the Régulos, Liurais, and Heads of Suco, on whom consuetudinary law and custom are based upon. The opposition to this scheme is soon rampant because it discredits all traditional local leaders. UDT who relies too heavily on this ancestral structure of the local power will soon start campaigning

IX) THE BISHOP OF DILI: BETWEEN REACTION AND REVOLUTION.

The Bishop of Dili, Dom José Joaquim Ribeiro, a long-serving member of the clergy in Timor, where he heads the influential Roman Catholics since 1966, has just [Dec. 74] arrived from Lisbon. There he held important negotiations with the Portuguese clergy about the Revolution of the Carnations⁵² and its implications for the future of Timor. Interviewed upon his arrival, Dom J. J. Ribeiro announces that:

“The position of the clergy in relation to the decolonisation process is publicly divulged by the Pastoral Letter of 16 July 1974 that I also subscribed. The neutrality of the priests in relation to the political process is the best way to serve the Christian flock in its elucidation of its rights and of its human and Christian responsibilities serving the Church of Christ who the priests are identified with, in their preaching of the gospel to the Timorese. The priests can and should help the Timorese in the decolonisation, by preaching for them and by helping them on their responsibilities in this time of options to construct the Timor of the future with peace, bread and progress in a Christian way. Everyone knows the Bishop always fought, even before the 25 April, the authorities and governors for the most fundamental rights and freedom for the people of Timor more than once his homilies were forbidden.”

This positioning of the Bishop to make the most of the new political order is somewhat controversial since most people

⁵² Popular name given to the revolution of April 25, 1974.

will certainly remember him by the strenuous opposition to any change in Timor. We mentioned earlier on, his veto to a discotheque in Dili and his not very strong opposition to gambling and poker machines, but nobody can ever remember any call for more political freedom or for the upholding of the “most fundamental rights of the people of Timor” during his reign of more than seven years, as head of the Catholic Church in Timor.

His strong political backing leads to his involvement in shaping some of the colonial government most autocratic positions. Without going much deeper in analysing his influential actions, it is generally acknowledged that his actions are heavily in favour of static demagoguery and strongly opposed to any progressist’ attempts. He is after all the only person responsible for the expulsion of the so much dedicated Father Rôxo, widely known as an expert in Timorese culture and customs, favours a more populist open Church of God, in its missionary action. He starts a few welfare and moral schemes of value, for those who have to rely on the strong inertia of administrative authorities, and his actions are more of an oasis in the desert of Church-led social and welfare activities. Father Rôxo can be considered as someone working with the people and for the people, whilst the Bishop is more of a political broker in line with the official policy of the colonial administration.

X) CREATING A GOVERNMENT COUNCIL IN TIMOR

Immediately after Christmas, the Cabinet for Political Affairs issues a Press Release about the replacement of the politico-administrative structures ruling Timor:

“Because it does not conform to the spirit strongly democratic of the M.F.A. [Armed Forces Movement], the Government decided to dissolve the Consultative Council last August, 17 to create an entity with a higher representation of the economic and political prevalent lines of thought in the Territory. Both UDT and FRETILIN seconded this initiative altogether with ACAIT [Timorese Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial Association]. APODETI based upon its own political program declined to participate, what this Government regrets since APODETI claims to represent a considerable margin of the electorate.

“The newly-formed Government Council will have 13 members of whom four are to be nominated as Government representatives:

The governor-general,

The Portuguese Republic’s Attorney-General in Timor,

The Head of the Civil Administration, and

The Treasurer. The remaining nine members will be:

Câncio Noronha representing the Reserve Bank “BNU,”

Jape Kong Su [Chinese importer and a leading trader],

Mariano Lopes da Cruz [delegate of the Government in the official broadcaster and UDT representative],

Three others representing FRETILIN, ACAIT and the Public Service, and the last three being industrial, commercial and agricultural organisations’ representatives.”

This broad nomination of people from the major interest groups of Timor provides the Government with a much sought after shielding against future problems. The Government, meanwhile quashes all speculation regarding the end of economic support from Portugal, announcing that a new interest-free subsidy of 20 million Escudos (AUD \$572,000) has been given to Timor.

In another development, the oil company Oceanic Exploration, in association with some Portuguese groups, forms a new company called PetroTimor, Companhia de Petróleos SARL, whose formal contract is signed in Lisbon by Moses Amzalak, Norman Singer and by the State Secretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry for inter-territorial Coordination, Castro Fontes. Although this is being touted as a new step for the economic development of East Timor, the company has already been active since March 1974, against a very vocal Australian opposition.

XI) THE NEW PRESS LAW

A very provisional “ad-hoc” Committee is sworn in to control the new Press Law, approved by Decree of 27 December 1974. In such Press Law some basic principles of freedom of information are regulated as follows:

“The need to safeguard secret military data; to avoid the perturbation of the public opinion by ideological aggression; to guarantee a free flow of information based upon the truth, the objectivity and the respect by the democratic legality and by the individual rights. There is the need to let all media entities follow their political tendencies, without the constraints that might restrict their constructive critical spirit to collaborate with the democratisation and decolonisation process. The strong urge to avoid the unduly abuse of a responsible freedom, without appeals or incitement to disorder and violence and the existence of only one broadcaster - owned by the government - implies that all political groups expressing freely their ideas and criticisms must have access to it.”

The “ad-hoc” Committee is made of two career Army Officers and a commissioned one (the so-called militia officer).

Meanwhile, it is announced that a delegation of members of the influential Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Australian Parliament would be visiting Dili in early January [1975] to assess the decolonisation process and to have conversations with the major political groups and with the government.

XII) THE RETURN OF RAMOS HORTA AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR FRETILIN

After three weeks overseas, Ramos Horta, the FRETILIN leader comes back from Australia full of vigour and hope. On his arrival he states:

*“I have noticed a high degree of interest and preoccupation towards this colony and I have received immediate support. East Timor is no longer a forgotten colony. The Australian Government assured me that it **“supports decisively the right to self-determination including the right to independence.”***

*“They do not agree with the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, who states there are only two ways: **“Either Timor continues under Portuguese domination”** (what Indonesia will not be likely to accept because it*

is a new form of colonialism) or, **“Timor should be integrated in Indonesia”**.

“Curiously enough, Mr Almeida Santos said the same at the United Nations and on his return to Lisbon, when he declared: “the people do not want to be decolonised.” Such statement can only reveal the fascist, reactionary and colonial mentality [of Almeida Santos]. It is an insult to [the Timorese] people as if admitting it wants to keep on being colonised, exploited and enslaved. Dr Almeida Santos is a eulogist of the bygone days of the Great Portuguese Colonial Empire who feels frustrated to see all his colonies flee through his fingers, revealing again his narrow-minded and vile spirit.

“Australia is willing to provide immediate support in the fields of education and health, with some scholarships for students to attend Universities and Institutes of technology, also providing equipment and pharmaceutical products that we lack in the health field. Some private organisations are very keen to provide support for some other minor projects that FRETILIN has in mind because they know that our party is the one most in line with the Charter of the United Nations Organisation. Such kind of support will be much more efficient once FRETILIN and the local government establish a jointly cooperation plan. In Australia, inflation exceeds 20 percent and there are more than 200 000 unemployed, and I have noticed that the Labour Party now in power is going through a very deep internal crisis. All this and what is happening in Europe and in the USA is but a symptom of the capitalist decadence of our world.”

Here we have José Ramos Horta convinced after three weeks of political contacts in Australia with Gough Whitlam, Sen. Don Willesee [acting Foreign Minister], Andrew Peacock, ACTU leaders, MP’s and Senators, the newly-formed CIET⁵³ and the Southern Africa Liberation Centre, that all eventually will be roses, thanks to their committed support. This will prove to be a very expensive mistake.

A most excruciating thing about Timor during this period is that although not at war everyone feels like under a barrage of fire. The siege mentality that pervades at a high-ranking level in the Portuguese Army creates a strong opposition to the militarism and develops an underground opposition to the status quo. This is not Africa, there are no liberation movements like FRELIMO or the MPLA, and yet everyone is being called to perform in the same way as if they were in the African jungles. Timor is not Vietnam but people feel like it is. One must not forget that the vast majority of conscripted Army Officers are in Timor because they tried all the tricks in the book to avoid the real fighting in Africa (colonial provinces). In terms of morale, this is the worst platoon of Army Officers to face an armed conflict.

XIII) THE PORTUGUESE FEELINGS REGARDING TIMOR

I remember some stale nights at Tropicália Café, when, after a few beers and spirits, our minds started flowing free, we would actually have the guts to defy the regime before the April Revolution. Outsiders are startled like the occasional foreign correspondent Joseph Lelyveld from the “New York Times” can hardly understand it. What most of us have in

⁵³ Campaign for the Independence of East Timor.

mind is, basically, a quick return home.

We are part of a transient military corps forced to be here at a certain time without any motives or motivation, so when the going got tough, the tough thought of going away. Egotistically the vast majority of all conscripted men never think of sparing one for Timor or the Timorese. We all are here for a short stint of approximately two years, to pay our contribution to the decaying Portuguese Empire, and that is it. Period.

A nice sort of forced holidays, not too many waves, and a safe return to Portugal with legends and fairy tales of unknown places. Some are even trying to have a go at a military career that can offset our employment shortcomings in a competitive civilian life, once returned. All the inconveniences are supposed to be treated as minor nuisances, an enrichment of life's experiences. Having as much of a nice time as feasible, who actually cares about what is going to happen to Timor? Not the career officers only anxious to get their promotions and even less, the conscripted ones.

Like so many others, my wife spends here less than a fortnight and is appalled with the lack of facilities and the primitiveness of the environs. Her attitude summarises a whole generation of white Portuguese people serving in Timor. How can anyone expect a different outcome when eight months later the civil war starts ravaging the colony? The Portuguese want out desperately, never to be involved in something unexpected, undesired and eventually uncontrollable. Even if the military brass of the small detachment of parachutists (the elite) want to have a go, no Governor or Commander-in-Chief will allow them to. Yet here we have Ramos Horta convinced that everything would be smooth sailing.

CHAPTER VI – 1975: THE END OF THE HISTORY OF TIMOR?

1. JANUARY: All the pawns in the micro-political chess decide to make a move and there is a Government Message

I) JANUARY:

January starts calmly with the New Year's message from the Governor-General, Lt. Col. Lemos Pires where it is expressed his wish that:

“May the political process develop in an atmosphere of peace that will guarantee the manifestation of the wishes of the people by the Armed Forces. 1975 will be decisive for Timor [is this only an enlightened guess?] so it is imperative that all the people realise that and raise their responsibilities and conscience. It belongs to the political associations - future political parties - the creation from now on of an atmosphere of mutual understanding to facilitate the definite option, truly conscious of their important and historic mission, and of their duties to the people. They will undoubtedly assume the responsibilities pertaining to their leadership to look for the best solutions in a climate of constructive tranquillity.”

II) FRETILIN APPEALS

FRETILIN is meanwhile appealing for all:

“To be alert against manoeuvres of a certain insignificant group, without any representativeness, which upon behest of interests alien to the Timorese people, intends to create more incidents to discredit the Armed Forces and the people. FRETILIN alerts for the racist tendencies of such manoeuvres, which aim to create conflicts between the people and the Armed Forces. Enraged, we repudiate any form of racism, and will not tolerate any discussion based on the colour of the skin. East Timor is not and will never be a racist country. Here live and will continue to live all those who want to contribute to the edification of a new society, with the Armed Forces for the upkeep of peace.”

The APMT [pro monarchical party] issues a communiqué in which reminisces over *“the blood and wine pact celebrated by the Timorese Régulos with the first Portuguese [who landed in Timor], pact that soon was transformed in a religious devotion of the Portuguese flag”* and, appeal to the authorities to avoid the *“psychological massacres and physical confrontation between APODETI forces and the Military Police [PM].”*

This is an incident where some APODETI sympathisers try to ambush and mob a small PM patrol (Military Police). Fortunately, the officers are experienced enough to keep their cool, although some shots into the air have to be fired. APODETI later declines any involvement in the incident, accusing other political forces of orchestrating it. This is the first incident opposing Timorese people and Portuguese military men for a very long time and although it is downplayed, some

people see it as an ominous omen for the future.

III) FRETILIN RECOGNISES PORTUGAL

FRETILIN issues a very long communiqué in which recognises Portugal as the only valid interlocutor in the decolonisation process, “agreeing in doing so, to take part in the Government Council, if the immediate political sanitation of the public administration is started.”

Again, they denounce that “there are in the [Government] Council some figures widely known by their participation in the *ancien régime*, namely in the Constitutional legislative Assembly and in the ANP⁵⁴. The administrative corps - as a bulwark of the colonialism - must be replaced by truly democratic institutions. FRETILIN reminds that “the Head of the Civil Administration [Administrator Santa] is a government nominated member of the Government Council” but is happy to see that the “businessman Jape Kong Su has been withdrawn.”

An official release from the Cabinet comments on this subject:

“On behalf of FRETILIN, an official communiqué states that the participation of that association in the Government Council will depend upon some political purge. His Excellency, the Governor-General restates his agreement with the ideological point made by FRETILIN, but cannot accept its position on the grounds of the urgency in solving daily problems of life in Timor. Such political purge is in the process, but has to be based upon concrete evidence on each and all cases; thus, it will be totally inappropriate to make any decisions before such evidence is duly studied. The Governor has no doubts to receive in the audience a member of the political bureau of FRETILIN, although he is a previous member of the Consultative Council.

“According to their refusal to take part in the [Government] Council unless their demands are satisfied, the nominated members [of FRETILIN] are not inaugurated and since we deem as improper to accept only members of one party, it is also decided not to inaugurate other party’s representatives. The government also acknowledges that a political association who claims to defend the interests of the population, after accepting to take part [in the Government Council] refuses to do so in a very crucial moment. Our decolonisation policy will move on, firmly and will not be affected by delays like this. The future of Timor lies in the hands of its people and its political associations. We regret that for the time being the administrative decisions of the Government have to be made without a broadly-based previous consultation with the representatives of the population.”

IV) A GOVERNMENT SETBACK

The Government Council on which the new administration relies to get the political process off the ground seems doomed. FRETILIN’s position has to be understood here, not only in terms of political ideology but mainly because some people who are responsible for the worst cases of colonial abuse are still clinging on to power and surviving the new

⁵⁴ The only legal party before the Portuguese revolution.

wave of political restructuring. The political background of those people is so much embedded in the old regime that, short of political brainwash, it will be extremely unfeasible to expect them to promote the new political order implanted after the April 25 Revolution.

With all their cunningness and the inside knowledge of all intricacies of power, they keep open wide access to the decision-makers. The government then proceeds with the immediate restructuring of the main portfolios. The Provincial Department of Planning and Economic Integration, the Provincial Department of Statistics, and the Centre for Tourism and Information are scrapped. The Cabinet is divided into four Sub-Cabinets:

GAP (Cabinet for Political Affairs)

GCS (Cabinet for Media and Social Communication)

GPEE (Cabinet for Economic Planning & Statistics)

GCI (Cabinet for the Coordination of Information)

Curiously the GCS (Cabinet for Media and Social Communication) publishes a telegram on the 16 January [1975] from the Ministry for inter-territorial coordination in which it instates: *“The Portuguese Government official position will be to respect results popular consultation, whatever they may be.”*

The only civilian in the new government, Dr Libânio Pires unexpectedly leaves Dili on the same date. According to some rumours, he is very unhappy with the decolonisation process being adopted by the military and hands in his resignation.

The GPEE (Cabinet for Economic Planning and Statistics) announces that S.A.P.T.A. (Agricultural Society ‘Motherland and Work’) will be privatised with a total capital of AUD \$1.4 million, of which 64 percent will be locally subscribed by the BNU (the issuing Bank of Timor) and by the local government, another 27 percent by the heirs of its founder Celestino da Silva, and the remainder by public subscription. The Government will have a delegate in the Board of Directors and the workers will have a representative, as well.

The GAP (Cabinet for Political Affairs) inaugurates the members of the Reclassification Committee (immediately dubbed the “sanitation committee”) that will be in charge of preparing the new administrative councils to replace the old civil administration. Apart from organising councils duly elected, the Committee has to define corruption, dishonesty, and incompetence and create harmony and tranquillity between the public servants.

The Governor Lt. Col. Lemos Pires is meanwhile trying to carve some new concepts into the bureaucratic minds of his public servants. During a public meeting with the majority of Dili’s civil officials, the Governor stresses that:

“All major structures in Timor are based upon the public servants so that the income of Timor is intrinsically dependent on their efficiency. The “fatalism” so common to the Timorese people is probably the worst characteristic. Everybody considers anything or any event as normal, all things happen because they just have to happen, and then later someone will think it over and how to solve it. The excess of bureaucracy - the so-called stop-o-cracy - is the main factor in reducing efficiency in the Public Service. It lacks initiative whereby no solutions

are put forward but everything is "to be put to the consideration of Your Excellency" or sometimes, more elegantly: "to the highest consideration of Your Excellency," or even "Your Excellency in your high judgement, will decide."

"You have to admit I am as fallible as any other human being and my knowledge in some technical matters is very limited, especially when experts in those fields have already studied the problems but forgot to present solutions. Agriculture is still the main producer and I expect a small increase in the price of basic staples, as well as a small increase in the lower wages - and only for these - and I hope to bring in more qualified technicians, to improve the productivity of the rural sector."

Someone queries the Governor regarding the "Timorisation" of salaries and wages but he replies that he has been instructed by Lisbon to do some adjustments, but:

"It would irresponsible to do so now, without knowing what is going to happen in August"

[Was this another premonition?].

"I deem as unwise the action of some parties with short-term objectives and they are short-sighted preferring to keep on destroying each other, instead of building up the future and elucidating the people about their ideological aims. They do not care about the disquiet they create, about the insecurity of the masses who listen to them and all this is intertwined with a vast array of rumours of impending Indonesian invasions, huge movements of troops, etc., all this adds to the insecurity, self-feeding new waves of rumours."

"I see as difficult the fusion of parties with different ideologies, but it could be worth considering their coalition based upon common grounds, that would be desirable. All leaders of the political parties are public servants; I ask them to reconsider all personal animosities and to make an effort to establish a coalition on behalf of Timor."

"Another problem that starts to feed me up is the Indonesian invasion threat when people say they are coming and behead the white people, especially the ones living in the Motael Lighthouse suburb ⁵⁵. I find it absolutely ridiculous and one of these days the Indonesian will call me ridiculous by allowing such rumours to persist."

Since September 1974, just before the acting representative of the Armed Forces Movement in Timor, Maj. Arnao Metello leaves for Lisbon, the author is spreading the word that unless a clear strategy on how to solve the political future of East Timor is quickly designed and implemented, it will not be long before the Indonesians take care of the unrest.

The censorship laws are still being enforced, in some cases (mine for instance) telephone tapping and the opening of private mail is still common. The only chance of getting some information out of Dili, without having it apprehended is to get some Australian hippies on their way to Bali to post it in Indonesia. A few reports eventually reach Portugal and are

⁵⁵ Where all the senior public servants and high-ranking military officers lived.

printed in newspapers stating that some people in Timor fear an Indonesian invasion.

It is evident after “Operasi Komodo” is put into action in October 1974 that some Indonesian Navy boats are patrolling Timorese waters. On some nights, one can see those vessels, at large, just in front of Dili Bay. If, for nothing else, it must be remarked, here and now, that Ataúro Island does not possess any lighting system capable of being seen from Dili (23 km. away). Even after noticing those lights moving back and forth in the dark horizon, week after week, nobody wants to believe it can be the Indonesian Navy.

The trading routes of vessels to Australia rarely cross the seas between Dili and Ataúro, but for all those people they are being used almost every night and gee! I did not know that Darwin is handling more than 300 vessels a year all coming via Timor. The radio operators at the military headquarters occasionally will catch some funny conversations in Bahasa Indonesia, coming from the sea, but the Intelligence Service never cares to check or translate them. For them, the danger is deep within the boundaries of East Timor and no outside danger is ever perceived.

V) THE GOVERNOR, THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE PORTUGUESE TELEVISION

On January 20, 1975, the Portuguese Television Network “RTP” sends a camera crew and a few journalists to see the developments of the new local government and the steps being taken towards decolonisation of Timor. In the interview, Governor Lemos Pires says:

“The opening of Timor to a situation of free expression of speech changed all the political weaving of the Territory, the parties started their political propaganda and although that was highly desirable it may have created some instability, because the unpoliticised population, - not to call them highly unpoliticised - did not absorb such political impact in a climate of tranquillity.

“A very controversial problem is the one concerning the viability of independence (both UDT and FRETILIN will only recognise Portugal as a valid mediator) and I have already told the parties that I do not consider Timor able to become independent with its current economic dependence. Independence would have to be gradually sought for with support from the outside in terms of economic aid or it will take a very long time to eventuate.

“What is going to be the will of the population? Who are they more inclined to? Which solution will please most of its people? It is very difficult to answer; the population is much unpoliticised. For example, when I go to the country local population ask: “How is it going to be Mr Governor?” and I tell them, you are the people of Timor; you are the ones who have to decide. They reply “If you tell us how to do it, Mr Governor, we’ll do it.”

“This only proves that for many years our colonial presence did not help develop the will of the population, as free and conscious as it would have been desirable. This, we cannot change overnight, we will have to wait calmly for a certain political evolution, for the parties to assume the responsibility to elucidate the population, to enable

them to freely and consciously chose the future that rightfully belongs to them."

If this sounds a bit paternalistic, let us not forget that most people, including the Governor, are having their first democratic experience of a lifetime. After being told and taught how to run colonies you cannot expect those people to be instantly ready to become democrats and decolonise. The political parties are also extensively interviewed by RTP, so that people back in Lisbon can feel the new winds of political freedom blowing in the far-flung colonies of the Empire, now being dismantled.

Domingos de Oliveira, Secretary-general of UDT states:

"UDT was the first party to be formed on May 11, 1974. During our first meeting, we loudly claimed as our final objective the independence of Timor-Dili. However, considering that at this stage there are no conditions or infrastructures capable of providing us with a reliable independence, we propose a link with Portugal until such independence becomes feasible.

"During our campaigns in the country we have not only done propaganda but we also polled what the population of Timor-Dili really aspires to and that is independence. That will not mean oblivion of the very few material things done by the Portuguese during five centuries of colonial rule.

"Notwithstanding the mistakes and errors, the population is aware that something positive, came out of it, and that is a reason why our manifesto defends principles like Timor being integrated into a Portuguese-speaking commonwealth after we achieve independence. Such integration will be on equal terms with Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil, and Portugal. UDT has a very strong popular support and following, from people who want to march to independence but are aware of the lack of human and economic resources. Because they know Portugal has a historical mission to perform, and cannot abandon an entire population that is not prepared for independence, people know that Portugal has to help us until we have feasible structures."

Francisco Xavier do Amaral, President of the Central Committee of FRETILIN states:

"After many developments, plenty of discussions and the polling of a small group of Timorese people, to ascertain the best way to provide for a happy future of the population, FRETILIN was created as a Social democratic Association. Internally we faced very strong opposition as well as government opposition from Governor Alves Aldeia and the Acting Governor Níveo Herdade. Our radio program was suspended for 60 days. In the country, we encountered many obstacles from the reactionary, since the population is passive. FRETILIN was taken to court and sentenced. Now our existence is legally feasible, because of the forces that defend the progressivism for the M.F.A. but if in the future that was made impossible we would then act clandestinely because we defend the masses against the exploitation of man by other men.

"We have to admit we are still surprised by the mere existence of a party that defends integration with Indonesia because we find it to be utterly ridiculous. Would there be in Portugal any chance of a small group advocating

integration with Spain? We deem APODETI existence as illegal.

“We wait for our independence ‘de jure’ to be recognised so that we can form a Provisional Government to prepare for our ‘de facto’ independence. Our fight is not against the Portuguese people; we are in solidarity with them in their fight to free Portugal from fascism. Our fight is against colonialism, exploitation of man by man, against neo-colonialism. Since its very first hour, FRETILIN rejects all ideologies contrary to the independence of East Timor, we do not want to discuss what was or not done here. We want to defend Timor in our plight for independence, and as well - if possible, and we think it is - to have Timor as part of a Portuguese-speaking commonwealth.”

FRETILIN is trying to reassure the most disgruntled elements of the community of their commitment to keeping Timor within a workable framework of Portuguese-speaking communities, even as an independent country.

The Secretary-general of APODETI, Osório Soares tells ‘RTP’ that:

“On this very moment, I am not very well prepared to speak out about the party, I was absolutely taken by surprise as I was doing some tree plantation. Knowing the physical distance of Timor in relation to Portugal and the total failure of 400 hundred years of colonialism seen in the stage of development that Timor has [not] reached, the lack of political, economic maturity, we see as no solution at all both the independence and the Federation.

“In a retrospective way to the ancient history of Timor we notice that before the colonisation there was unity, thus the divisiveness was created by the colonialism itself. Once it is extinct we have to go back to the cause of separation, the link with Indonesia seemed then to be the most feasible in this context that is how APODETI was born. In this period, after APODETI was formed on 27 May 1974 we have tried a horizontal plan, extensive work of letting the population know their ancestral traditions, their secular feelings.

“This position assumed by APODETI implies in international terms a consent by the Republic of Indonesia. Our activity until now [January 1975] is well structured in some regions where Régulos and their people defend and accept our principles. We talk about Atsabe, Rai-Mean, Ai-Assa and Oé-cusse. Our main objective is a referendum, we have to win the referendum or elections, as the government decides, and immediately after we will form a commission, composed of representatives of Portugal, Indonesia and APODETI to study the transition period to the development and sociocultural progress of the people of Timor.

“When people say that APODETI is illegal we just have to remind them of the words of Dr Mário Soares [the Prime Minister] when he said that for the decolonisation “one would have to listen to Indonesia and Australia” and those words of Dr Almeida Santos [Minister for inter-territorial Coordination] at the United Nations when he declared that Timor has only two options: “To stay under the control of Portugal or to become an integrating part of Indonesia”. “Apart from historical and geographical reasons APODETI is the only party that can provide Timor with a realistic solution for its future.”

APODETI is playing its cards carefully, exploiting statements of Dr Mário Soares and Dr Almeida Santos to enhance their position in the local political chessboard.

VI) IN FAVOUR OF TIMORESE JUSTICE

A Portuguese lawyer, a long-term resident of Timor, Dr Cravo Cascais [who will join UDT in August 1975 during the coup] is then expressing his alarm over the striking misjudgement between the [Portuguese applicable] laws and the realities of Timor.

“We pretend to defend society from one of its members by considering him a criminal under the wrong assumption that the society wishes such a course of action when the society determines and imposes under threat of discredit and marginalisation the attitude that will make the culprit liable of prosecution. Once back in freedom the condemned if faced with a similar situation [to the one that provoked his sentencing] will act exactly in the same way. So, if we impose penalties and sentences to prevent and repress crimes in such stances none of these aims will be attained. We need to “Timorise” the justice and accept the norms on which the law shall be based upon.”

This shocking example of how Portuguese based laws are being applied to the Timorese can be compared to the injustice of applying judicial codes of any other coloniser to the colonised. In fact, people are being sentenced to the mere application of their consuetudinary codes. Their society forces certain codes of honour, then the coloniser (assuming its typical colonising superiority) will punish them for the outrageous attitude of following such codes of honour. Try to imagine how scandalous the situation would be in Australia, between the Aborigines and the rest of the population, or even between the Lebanese, the Greek or the Italian, or any other ethnic group, trying to impose their laws on the predominant Anglo Saxon group of Australia and its laws.

VII) EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNICATION ROUTES DECOLONISED

Meanwhile, Governor Lemos Pires, nominates a Commission to the Restructuring of the Educational System, with seven members, of which some are quite controversial:

- Roque Rodrigues, second Lieutenant and one of the minds behind the FRETILIN’s political manual;
- 2nd Lt. Barbedo de Magalhães (and his wife);
- Dr Júdice de Magalhães;
- Caldeira Batista, Primary School Teacher, a known sympathiser of UDT and intimate friend and associate of Dr Félix Correia [the local President of the only Portuguese political party “ANP” during the dictatorship, and Head of Education Dept.];
- António Duarte Carvarino, President of the “House of Timor in Lisbon,” a leading ideologist of FRETILIN and the starter of the new literacy campaigns in Timor.

It is also announced that the new road Dili - Maliana is being started, as well as much-needed repairs and improvements on the roads Lautém - Lore and Baucau - Bé-Asso. During the inauguration of the Commission for the Educational System,

Major Mota, [Chief of Cabinet for Political Affairs and Special Assistant to the Military Cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief], summarises the political process in Timor, like this: “Of the consequences of the 25th April in Timor, I make a distinction between two separate periods: one until 18 November 1974 and another after the arrival of the new Governor and his team.”

On May 13, there is the first visible sign in Timor of the New Order, with the inauguration of a Commission for Self-Determination, Political Support, and Coordination. Its work is extremely relevant for the embryonic political movements, namely because it provides APODETI with a legal umbrella. Major Mota adds:

“During its existence [The Commission for Self-Determination] strong signs of disagreement with the Governor were highly visible. It must be recalled that Governor Aldeia had been extremely unfortunate when mentioning the aborted “Caldas Movement” [on 16 March 1974] and calling traitors to those young officers who risked everything to change the destiny of their country. He was also quite unconvincing, later, when trying to prove he adhered to the new political order. After this, the parties start their political activity both locally and with foreign countries.

“On July 15 the new Acting Governor is installed, and the political situation reverses, with too many people, interested in maintaining the status quo, being kept in their influential posts. No visible signs of decolonisation can be seen and Timor is kept sleeping in its ancestral sluggishness. The most progressive political organisations feel discouraged and start the fight for their claims, to impose their ideologies. ASDT is the first with a rally in Dili, where it frantically attacks the privileged minorities who dominate Timor, and soon after, is banned off the political process and kept at bay because it threatens the existing structures.”

“The Government repudiates on August 15 the Commission for Self-Determination (which was doing a fine groundwork) and its members resign. The military climate deteriorates until it reaches insubordination and collective indiscipline. It worsens with the departure of Major Arnao Metello because the local government is totally inoperative and no clear directives are being received from Lisbon. The political associations become much more radical and create a climate of demagoguery, with accusations to the left and to the right, problems become personalised, and ancient hatred is reignited. It is under such a convoluted climate that the new Governor and his team arrive on November 18, with the full support of the [Portuguese] Commission for Decolonisation and are prepared to follow the main decolonisation principles.”

Major JÓNATAS, Head of the Social Communication [Media] portfolio in the new Cabinet, also adds:

“We can define the type of teaching available in Timor, as typical of a colonial, fascist and elitist society, with the all but exclusive import of metropolitan⁵⁶ teachers. No equal opportunities are given to the youth segregated according to their economic status. The Timorese culture is more visible in the markets than in the classroom, and it must come to the surface.”

⁵⁶ Mainland Portuguese people.

VIII) A POLITICAL COALITION, WITHOUT APODETI

Following the preaching for cooperation expressed by the Governor, but somewhat unexpectedly, UDT and FRETILIN sign a joint agreement. Such alliance is designed to counter pressure emanating from Indonesian broadcasts and the propagation of alarmist rumours by APODETI. The lengthy communiqué, by the two political parties, stresses the common points between them and is an important document to understand fully the political mesh that permeates East Timor. Here are some highlights of that historical document:

1. *"Total independence for East Timor (Timor-Dili was the preferred version for UDT).*
2. *Repudiation of APODETI, because it defends integrationist ideals, which are neo-colonialist and contrary to the real interests of the people of Timor and to the United Nations Chart.*
3. *Rejection of integration in any foreign power or country, namely Indonesia. After the independence, all efforts will be done to encourage good neighbouring relations, friendship, and cooperation with all countries in the world including Indonesia.*
4. *Repudiation of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. We express the desire to introduce new political, economic, cultural and social structures, truly democratic, to replace the decadent colonial ones, to build and develop the country.*
5. *Recognition of Portugal as an only valid mediator for the decolonisation process. Establishment of cooperation agreements in all sectors and at all levels, to benefit the population of East Timor (Timor-Dili) and Portugal. Adoption of Portuguese as an official language.*
6. *To address the U.N. to accompany the decolonisation processes and assist Portugal, to achieve independence. This coalition reserves the right to veto the [U.N.] country members who shall take part in the Supervisory Committee, and declines all participation by the major powers, ASEAN countries and others under Indonesian influence, including Australia.*
7. *Creation of a transition government through negotiations in Lisbon (between the Portuguese Government, FRETILIN and UDT).*
8. *Establishment of local agreements for:*
 - a) *The creation of an 'ad-hoc' commission to supervise radio broadcasts, political rallies and written articles for public dissemination;*
 - b) *Ideological non-aggression, and mutual respect for [political] programs and projects;*
9. *Cooperation to achieve a political consciousness of the people geared towards national independence;*
10. *The Portuguese Timor territory will be called East Timor and their inhabitants Timorese."*⁵⁷

The communiqué's final part is a message to the Portuguese people and the African colonies, from which we extract the following paragraphs:

"While the African colonies are preparing to reach total independence, the people of East Timor now face the most enduring moment of its History of colonised territory - the cold war waged by the imperialist block of countries.

⁵⁷"Timores" in Portuguese instead of the then usual noun "Timorenses." Later, "Timores" will be replaced by "Maubere people."

Isolated in the Southeast Asia region, nicknamed “immobile transatlantic steamer” by a Minister of the [Portuguese] Provisional Government, the people of East Timor appeals to the solidarity of brotherly countries.”

Immediately after this is made public, the Commander-in-Chief issues a statement in which, alleging the gravity of the comments, is forced to clarify the facts against the marginalisation of APODETI, rejects any kind of pressures, reaffirms the exemption of the Armed Forces in relation to the coalition [of FRETILIN and UDT].

Actually, this is a well-meant, truly democratic and somewhat sophisticated attitude by the Commander-in-Chief (and Governor), but in a still emerging politicised society, will create more problems than the ones it is trying to solve.

The population is wondering how the Governor, who so actively preaches on behalf of union, solidarity and cooperation, criticises it immediately after the coalition becomes public, and berate it as a change in the peace and tranquillity of Timor geopolitical climate. The population so used to be told what to do, how to do it and when, does not take it easy when after doing what they are told to, and how and when they are told, the same ‘leader’ criticises them for being short-sighted.

2. PRECEDENTS OF WAR AND THE SUMMIT.

1) THE BACKGROUND MANOEUVRES

Misinformation and gossip regarding an imminent invasion of East Timor become a constant, and leads an Australian broadcaster to announce on February, 24, 1975 that *“Indonesia is preparing an attack of amphibious and anti-aerial troops to Dili [the capital of East Timor] and to Baucau [the second most important city] within a few weeks.* As if to confirm such intent, the Indonesian Consul in Dili, Dr Tomodok sends his family back to Indonesia.

Simultaneously, an Indonesian paper, “The New Standard”, controlled by President’s Suharto adviser on Security Matters, General Ali Murtopo, is publishing articles where it is stated that:

“East Timor cannot become independent because of a lack of natural resources and because an independent East Timor will be pried open to communist influences thus affecting the regional stability.”

In early March 1975, the Indonesian Command for Security Matters advises that West Timor is off bounds for all Indonesian and international journalists.⁵⁸ The author is actually forced to overstay his long service holiday. This coincides

⁵⁸ The author, after an amnesty granted to all military personnel, by President Spínola, is finally authorised in December 1974, to leave East Timor on army’s long service leave in mid December, travelling to Bali and Java (Jakarta, Surabaya) before visiting Australia (Melbourne and Sydney), where he has contacts with the Portuguese diplomacy in those capitals, and tries to ascertain the full extent of the revolution of the carnations, and the popular opinion for the future of East Timor. Upon his return to Indonesia, on his way back to Timor, he is impeded to embark a Merpati Airline flight to Kupang - West Timor, because the territory is ‘off-limits’. Trying to insist and reiterating his position as a [Portuguese] Army Officer, the situation is further aggravated and being suspected of being a spy, he is interrogated by the local Indonesian military authorities. Then, he decides to go back to Bali and when he finally tries again at the end of March, is finally allowed to proceed on his flight to Dili, East Timor.

His untimely arrival signs the possibility of a court martial case, for desertion, as it is claimed in some conservative local quarters. However, due to the rarefied situation of army officers, the Head of the Supply Battalion has been trying to go back to Portugal, but has

with hard needed improvements on roads to the border with East Timor and with the preparation of the [future] invasion of the Portuguese colony.

March 1975 is a very eventful month for the future of the Timorese, but very few people know about it. In London, there is a secret meeting between Ali Murtopo and Portuguese representatives, to discuss the future of Portuguese Timor. Unbeknown to most people, this secret meeting between Portuguese and Indonesian representatives takes place under a cloud of secrecy and treason.

Between the 3rd and 5th April, before Suharto visits East Timor, he has lengthy conversations with the Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam in the Queensland backwater city of Townsville. A whole set of unpublished events is taking place, without the interested parties having any knowledge that their future is being decided in typical colonial and paternalistic terms, by their colonial and imperial masters.

According to some secret reports from the Australian Foreign Office, the situation changed drastically between January and April.

In a brief to an ANZUS ministerial meeting, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs presents the following statements, sometime in April 1975:

“Much of the urgency has been removed on this issue [Portuguese Timor]. The red lights that were flashing in late February, and which led the Prime Minister to send a personal message to President Suharto, now show a steady amber. The Indonesian(s) have assured us at all levels that they are not contemplating military intervention. There is a less strident tone to Indonesian propaganda. Latest intelligence reports reveal no preparation for “early military action.”

“The Portuguese, meanwhile, have reaffirmed their willingness to follow a very gradual timetable for decolonisation in Timor. This also seems to be acceptable to the political groupings on the ground, as well as to the Indonesian(s). Secret high-level talks between the Indonesian and the Portuguese took place in London early in March. These appear to have left the Indonesian(s) fairly well satisfied with Portuguese assurances that there will be no immediate proclamation of independence (on the model of Mozambique) but that there will, in fact, be a long-drawn-out process of decolonisation (five to eight years) ending with a Constituent Assembly decision on the future political status of the territory.

“President Suharto reiterated to the Prime Minister in Townsville [3-5 April] that Indonesia had “no expansionist ambitions and favoured a process of self-determination for the Portuguese Timorese.” These assurances were welcome but in a very uncertain situation, the Indonesian(s) will clearly remain very much on their guard against any signs that the outcome in Portuguese Timor may not be to their liking. It is clear that the Indonesian(s) remain unshaken in their resolve that, ultimately, Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia.

no immediate subordinate to succeed him. The author is pardoned, his explanation of impossibility of flying back is accepted, and its 'AWOL' status revoked, he is also given a commendation for high merit and relevant services, and he is elevated to acting Head of the Supply Battalion.

"The Indonesian(s) see the goal of incorporation being achieved through an Indonesian influenced act of self-determination and they believe (probably inaccurately) that they have won Portugal's agreement to facilitate Indonesia's covert efforts to this end. However, indications are that, in present circumstances, an act of self-determination would favour the pro-independence parties, no matter how much covert Indonesian involvement there was.

"At the same time, it is appropriate as well to recognise that FRETILIN is clearly not in the same class, in terms of representativeness and demonstrated the ability to take over, as say, FRELIMO in Mozambique. Its alliance with the pro-Portuguese UDT is also a shaky one. The Indonesian(s) themselves consider, that given time, and the opportunity they believe Portugal has agreed to afford them, it will be possible by working hard, covertly as well as overtly, to build-up APODETI into a strong force.

"These are the seeds of a more immediate problem in the apparent opposition of the Indonesian(s) to Portuguese plans to move fairly quickly to establish a transitional government in Portuguese Timor which would gradually take over internal self-government responsibilities for the territory. While UDT - FRETILIN appear to accept a fairly protracted transitional period before independence, the coalition also clearly envisages a progressive transfer of real power to a functioning government firmly reflecting the political forces in Timor. Where does all this leave us?

"As long as Portuguese Timor remains quiet, no firm evidence of communist subversion emerges, and groups there do not allow themselves to be used by dissident groups from Indonesia itself, the Indonesian Government is likely not to take precipitate action in the territory but concentrate on developing its influence there.

"President Suharto is cautious and pragmatic. He prides himself on Indonesia's responsible foreign policy and will search for a solution to the Timor problem consistent with it. Provided there are no untowards developments in the territory, the Indonesian might even come to accept the idea of an independent Timor and modify their policy objective accordingly. But there are certainly no signs that they have done so yet. In the final analysis, Indonesia's decision will be based on how it sees its national interest and on the extent to which perceives Portuguese Timor as a threat to its security. Australia is not directly involved. We believe that it is the responsibility of Portugal to bring the territory through what should be a long process of decolonisation, given the low-level of political and social development."

"The end product should be consistent with the wishes of the Portuguese Timorese people. The best result from our point of view would still be some form of association with Indonesia, but this is still unlikely to command popular support in Timor or to be easy for the Indonesian(s) to contrive. The long-term prospects are for a rather sticky situation. The degree of Australian involvement will, it is hoped, be kept to a minimum."

The Australian Foreign Affairs experts on Timor while accepting the Indonesian reassurances are trying to keep away from a potential conflict. In the meantime, the coalition is definitely on the brink of collapse. Lopes da Cruz, Secretary-

General of UDT on a visit to Indonesia during April, accuses FRETILIN of being communist, hinting of a new coalition with APODETI. Later, FRETILIN demands a retraction but UDT declines to do so. Immediately after his return from Indonesia, Lopes da Cruz refuses to join a coalition delegation to the African colonies. Such delegation comes out of a FRETILIN proposal to go to Africa in search of support from the African freedom fighters, which are preparing themselves to achieve independence from Portugal.

Lemos Pires (in a well-meant or naïve gesture?) proposes to convene a meeting to debate the Summit between all parties to be held soon after in Macao. FRETILIN opposes this meeting and calls it a pre-emptive action on the part of the Government, trying to create some divisiveness in anticipation of the support the coalition could obtain from the African Liberation Movements.

A Portuguese lawyer, Dr João Loff Barreto, gives an address at the World Court ⁵⁹, in mid-1981 where he provides a detailed report of that aforementioned secret meeting in London:

“Almeida Santos said that Portugal was well aware of the advantages of both the incorporation [of Timor] in Indonesia and the maintenance of links with Portugal, but that in his opinion, Portugal would never impose a decision contrary to the will of the population. He suggested that Indonesia should use the transitional period to encourage the Timorese people to accept the idea of incorporation, fighting the hostility [of the Timorese] against Indonesia. For that to be achieved, they [Indonesia] should convince APODETI to cooperate in the decolonisation process, and offer economic aid to Timor.”

According to Loff Barreto, the Portuguese delegation asks an Indonesian representative to attend the Macao Summit, to take place in June 1975. Important is the fact that, most probably willfully, Indonesia leaks the results of the London meeting to FRETILIN, as part of a vast plan of boycotting the decolonisation process. This opinion expressed by Loff Barreto will force FRETILIN to withdraw from the Macao Summit.

As previously mentioned other sources confirm such points. For Michael Richardson, the secret deals result in a verbal agreement between the two delegations. In an article in the Melbourne ‘The Age’, Richardson publishes:

“Portugal accepted as the easiest way for the decolonisation of Timor, the incorporation of Timor through an internationally accepted act of self-determination, avoiding at all costs the internationalisation of Timor’s situation in the United Nations.”

Hamish Macdonald, in the book “Suharto’s Indonesia”, published by Fontana in 1980, mentions that, in a secret report emanating from OPSUS [The Indonesian Special Operations Unit of BAKIM, headed by Ali Murtopo], it is alleged that *“Portugal hopes that Indonesia accepts the idea of incorporation through a self-determination act and that Indonesia coerces APODETI to take part in the process. For that purpose, Indonesia’s image has to be improved, since a great part of the neighbouring population of Timor considers it to be a hostile enemy.”*

⁵⁹ Permanent Court of International Justice established under the auspices of a covenant of the League of Nations in 1921, whose functions in general were taken over by the International Court of Justice in The Hague, now part of the United Nations.

Regarding this point, the Indonesians will later invoke assurances from Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves to General Ali Murtopo, that *“it was irrelevant for Portugal if Timor continued [or not] under Portuguese sovereignty.”* This point leads up to the conclusion that the subtle manoeuvres lead by the Portuguese backfire. From the very moment when they engage themselves in secret dealings with the Indonesians, the Portuguese are trapped. They cannot avoid the international public opinion (or the Portuguese one for that effect) of the Indonesian intentions. They had been terribly compromised by the Indonesians.

The only possible alternative in those early days is discussed by Major Vítor Alves, Dr Mário Soares and Dr Jorge Campinos (the leading negotiators) but unanimously rejected. Such alternative is to abandon all bilateral talks [with Indonesia] and appeal to the United Nations to avoid the invasion. Some people in the Portuguese leadership defend such an option: Major Melo Antunes, Lt. Col. Lemos Pires (the last Governor of Portuguese Timor), and the local representatives of the Decolonisation Commission, Majors Jónatas and Mota, but their efforts are defeated by Almeida Santos and Vítor Alves.

There is an insidious coincidence between what happens later [the Indonesian annexation in July 1976] and the situation, back in 1941 with the Japanese invasion. Although the latter happened during World War II, the former takes place in a period of vast political agitation and deterioration of power in Lisbon. The common point is that in both instances the Central Government of Portugal is totally unable (if not, altogether unwilling) to muster enough resources to maintain its authority in the same colony.

Until April 1975 there is not much else to report on the continuing struggle of the Timorese, apart from the bellicose radio campaigns waged by Indonesia. These are conducted through Radio Kupang and the newspaper of the Armed Forces *“Berita Yudha,”* in which FRETILIN, UDT and the Portuguese Armed Forces and its Commander Lt. Col. Lemos Pires, are accused of being *“communist agents.”* The threat of invasion gains new ground.

With the unexpected coalition [of UDT and FRETILIN], APODETI becomes the common enemy. UDT is solidly behind the idea of total independence, as initially demanded by FRETILIN, and any talk of integration in Indonesia is considered as treason. The local geopolitical interests represented by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Australia are less than homogenous and are being seriously threatened by internal fighting in Borneo and in the Philippines.

This new menace coming from Timor cannot be accepted under any circumstance, or else it might spread as an infectious disease. It is not hard to imagine how such a political group will oppose the Timorese coalition. The ideological backbone of FRETILIN makes it almost impossible to fall prey to any attempts of sabotage, leaving UDT as a possibility in terms of recuperation to the dissimulated neo-colonial imperialism. Socially the background of FRETILIN and UDT leaders is basically the same, middle-class, Public Service, colonised elites, Régulos, other traditional leaders, and landowners. Logically such coalition is destined to fail, the rank and file of UDT oppose most of the FRETILIN aims because they will be deprived of their influence. On the other side of the political fence, APODETI presses the Government for a public referendum during March 1975, under the threat of an Indonesian invasion.

The political climate in Jakarta is definitely anti-Portuguese, as I have the 'privilege' of noticing in March 1975. All contradictions about a referendum, the lack of commitment from Lisbon to proceed with it and the excessive democratic balance of the local government trying desperately not to favour any party, cause the downfall of the coalition. UDT decides to ask for more guarantees from the Portuguese Government while FRETILIN presses hard on the independence issue. It is in this very particular context that we have to understand the progressive approach between UDT and APODETI, noticeable after April. Such a political realignment tries to fill the void created by the lack of massive appeal of UDT ideological line.

This group tried to re-orientate itself towards a classical concept of guaranteed independence, under a neo-colonial guise, as the only means of maintaining the support of its sympathisers, most of who lack political allegiance, whatsoever.

The population has gradually adjusted itself to the notion of independence rejecting any thoughts of integration. This has the strong advantage of giving the Portuguese government a feasible escape from the problem and a very logical one in such a complex decolonisation process. These behind the scene secret deals assume a new dimension when an Indonesian delegation headed by President Suharto visits Timor. During such an unusual visit in April 1975, it is stated: ***"The government of the Republic of Indonesia will accept the independence of Timor if such is the universally expressed will of the people of Timor."***

The three main parties are invited to pay back the visit, thus making them more divided than ever. Back in Australia, the avid press has been publishing reports since February of intelligence "leaks" on the planned Indonesian invasion of East Timor.

Major Vítor Alves, a leading figure in the Armed Forces Movement and one of the major ideologist of the Portuguese Revolution is appointed as a special envoy of the Lisbon Government. He is to go to Indonesia, Timor and to represent the Portuguese at the Macao Summit. The visit to Indonesia occurs in May amid some unmistakable signs.

The author is temporarily living in Jakarta at the time. The Portuguese Ambassador has long left the country for consultations in Lisbon, never to return. The Portuguese delegation is being managed by a young career diplomat, Chargé d'affaires Souza-Girão⁶⁰, a young foreign corps officer not weathered in the meanders of international diplomacy.

The visit of Major Vítor Alves is decided on the spot and less than 24 hours later he is flying to Jakarta, arriving almost at the same time as the telegram sent to the Portuguese Embassy advising of the impending arrival.

A similar problem is witnessed by the author in January in Australia, after some contacts with the Portuguese Consul General in Sydney, (the late) Dr Deolindo Encarnação and the Honorary Consul in Melbourne, (the late) Mr John Dowd,

⁶⁰ Later, being a diplomat in West Germany, in the mid 80s he is charged with corruption and sentenced to eight years imprisonment for issuing illegal and fraudulent passports to non-Portuguese citizens.

who complained immediately after Ramos Horta visits Australia that they have no directives from Lisbon on any measures to be taken.

This shows the lack of organisation of the Portuguese decolonising powers.

In Lisbon, the Government publicises the Summit where FRETILIN, UDT, and APODETI will take up their claims for the future of Portuguese Timor. A document prepared in Lisbon during May 1975 is presented to the three major political parties of East Timor regarding the self-determination of the territory. Formal negotiations follow in June, between representatives of the Central Government in Lisbon and East Timor political parties.

Thus comes into effect the Law Decree 7/75 of 11 July 1975 stating that:

- 1. A General Parliamentary Assembly of East Timor will be elected in October 1976, to define its future political statute and*
- 2. Allowing for a three year transitional period, between the end of Portuguese sovereignty in October 1978 and then,*
- 3. The power transfer to the new Independent State or to Indonesia.*

May, 27, [1975] UDT unilaterally cuts its link with the coalition established on January 20 with FRETILIN. This occurs immediately after the return to Dili of two of the major UDT leaders, Francisco Lopes da Cruz [President] and César Mouzinho [Vice-President] who held talks in Jakarta in the previous week after contacts with high-ranking Indonesian officials. With such rupture in the coalition, Indonesia is all ready for an effective destabilising of the territory. Apart from these difficulties and problems, the Portuguese administration is able to keep moving towards decolonisation in areas such as local administration and education. It is more a problem of adapting the programs, curricula and methodology teachings to the realities and needs of East Timor.

The Salesian Mission School of Fatumaca is an inspiring source. The development of arts and crafts, as well as rural teachings, is accompanied by the introduction of health education and health support to the schools. Simultaneously school programs are changed to include History, Geography, Legends, and Traditions of East Timor as part of a major educational restructuring. Some schools are equipped with arts and crafts workshops, the land is made available for horticultural projects, and teachers are to be retrained after 11 August 1975. A pilot project is conducted a week earlier at the Salesian Mission School of Fatumaca [near Baucau] to prepare rural foremen able to conduct agricultural teaching on all thirteen schools of secondary education.

The Administrative Review conducted by the Government intends replacing the colonial administration with another, freely expressed in elections that can become more representative of the local population. It all starts in December 1974, with a special request from the population of the far eastern coast to the new Governor. After some months of consultation with political parties, it gives way to new legislation and to an electoral process that starts at Lautém [Far Eastern Coast]. FRETILIN complains that according to the Portuguese Government, APODETI is included because even UDT will consider it antidemocratic if APODETI is not invited to take part.

UDT is still reaffirming its support to the deposed President Spínola without mentioning the new President installed in September, Gen. Costa Gomes. The brief military coup on 11 March 1975 installs a pro-leftist idealist - Vasco Gonçalves - in power in Lisbon. This is considered by many to represent the victory of the radical left against the moderates represented by Gen. Spínola among others. UDT is thus denying more than seven months of political events in Portugal because they know just how much Spínola favoured a Federation for Timor. Both Gen. Costa Gomes and the Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves are in favour of independence for all colonies according to the African model to be implemented in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, S. Tomé, and Príncipe.

Mari Bin Alkatiri, a vocal leader of FRETILIN [a Muslim from the very few Arabic people settled in Timor] accuses UDT of: *“Withdrawing from the coalition agreements and of becoming a lackey of imperialist and reactionary forces, more interested in creating neo-colonial regimes and mock-up independence than to fight for the real autonomy and independence of Timor.”* FRETILIN becomes more and more radical, keeping up its ideological coherency, and becoming alarmingly more criticised by the decoloniser, who feel more and more impotent to proceed with a so-called peace process. For them, FRETILIN threatens to divide and antagonise a population who survived 500 years of colonial occupation with a certain degree of homogeneity. FRETILIN refuses to budge and sit at the Summit with a puppet party sponsored by Indonesian imperialists. They consider APODETI as a party who betrayed its own people and its undeniable right to total independence.

By June, I believe that some people in the Portuguese Government have already admitted their failure in maintaining a decolonisation process going. It can possibly be read from their preference to criticise openly FRETILIN in order to have a Summit at any cost. Officially though, the line being followed in those days is that the Government cannot submit to the blackmail being exerted by FRETILIN in order to avoid having APODETI at the negotiating table. UDT is quick to accept the total failure of the coalition and is openly accusing FRETILIN of being mere agents of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. This coincidentally is the same line of reasoning offered by the Indonesia Radio Broadcasts.

On June 26, a public rally held by UDT in support of the Summit, has all support from the local government, as Alexandre Gusmão⁶¹ notes on an editorial in the Dili based newspaper “A Voz de Timor” [V.T.]. Subsequently, the Government (who controlled V.T.) sues Gusmão, “V.T.” is fined Esc. 50 000\$00 (approx. AUD \$1,430) and determines that daily edition be apprehended. The Summit takes place in Macao, amid some controversy and the scandalous activities of Major Vítor Alves⁶², the absence of FRETILIN and a modicum of interest from the international Press Agencies. The resulting document signed and agreed by all participants in the Summit, bureaucratically named Constituent Law 7/75 has three major conclusions:

1. *“Election of the National Assembly of Timor [Parliament] in October 1976, to decide then the future political statutory situation in Timor, including the probable or possible incorporation in Indonesia.*
2. *End of Portuguese sovereignty by October 1978.*

⁶¹ José Alexandre Gusmão, later known as Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão.

⁶² Those activities take place at the local nightclub ‘Mermaid’ at the Hotel Lisbon Casino Complex, full of Filipino call girls, on a very busy night of international diplomacy.

3. *Transfer of powers between those two dates to the newly independent state or to Indonesia.*"

FRETILIN ghastly criticises the resolutions and considers them to be "in collusion with imperialistic interests, favouring the stability of the geopolitical area in which Timor was inserted." This argument is not as heavy-handed as one might think because such discourse is not followed in relation to South African interests when Mozambique became independent that July [1975]. The FRETILIN delegation who attends the Mozambique independence ceremonies is victoriously paraded through Dili, and its President Xavier do Amaral acclaimed in a public rally with more than 25,000 people showing their solidarity with the brotherly colony of Mozambique.

Before moving on to the fatal month of August, let us peruse some secret documentation⁶³ found accidentally in a storage room at a Portuguese Diplomatic Mission (somewhere in the world). There are hundreds of files all over the place, untouched since 1975. Unfortunately, luck will not allow a full retrieval of those⁶⁴. Early March 1975, Richard A. "Dick" Woolcott replaced R. W. Furlonger as Australian Ambassador to Indonesia and states in a cable to Canberra:

"21 JULY 1975 CONFIDENTIAL PORTUGUESE TIMOR: BRITISH POLICY - To Canberra Repeat

Lisbon, London, Moscow, Peking, From Djakarta

"BRITISH AMBASSADOR FORD [Sir John Archibald Ford] HAS GIVEN ME A PERSONAL BASIS COPY OF REPORT OF HIS HEAD OF CHANCERY (GORDON DUGGAN) ON HIS VISIT TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR EARLIER THIS MONTH. WE ARE SENDING COPY BY SAFE HANDBAG TODAY AS NON-AUSTRALIAN REPORT COULD BE OF INTEREST IN COMPLEMENTING OUR OWN REPORTING. MEANWHILE, YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN FOLLOWING COMMENT BY FORD IN COVERING LETTER TO FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office]. ONE CONCLUSION DOES SEEM TO STAND OUT FROM GORDON'S REPORT: THE PEOPLE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR ARE IN NO CONDITION TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION; THEIR POLITICIANS ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE THEIR SQUABBLING AND DISSENSION AND, IN ABSENCE OF A STRONG LEAD FROM LISBON OR A MILITARY COUP, POLITICAL CONFUSION WILL GROW WORSE AND THE TERRITORY'S SOIL BECOME EVEN MORE FERTILE FOR TROUBLEMAKING.

"DUGGAN SAW NO EVIDENCE THAT EITHER THE RUSSIANS OR THE CHINESE WERE YET STIRRING THE POT, BUT ANY INCREASE IN SOVIET INFLUENCE IN LISBON MIGHT INCREASE THE CHANCES THAT THE FORMER WILL SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION, AND WE SHALL KEEP AS CLOSE AN EYE OUT AS POSSIBLE FOR SIGNS THAT THEY ARE DOING SO.

"EVEN WITHOUT SOVIET OR CHINESE INTERVENTION THE TERRITORY SEEMS LIKELY TO BECOME STEADILY MORE OF

⁶³ Some of these documents were briefly made public in Australia in a publication by George Munster and J. Walsh, 1980, "Documents on Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy 1968-1975," Munster and Walsh, Hong Kong. This book was censored by the [Malcolm] Fraser government and still is now classified as 'secret of state', being out of publication. They reveal the extent of the Australian 'approval' of the invasion and the collusion for the exploitation of the riches of the Timor Sea, between Australia and Indonesia that led to the Timor Gap Treaty in 1990.

⁶⁴ All translations herein from English and Portuguese are the author's responsibility. Translations from Tetun are according to the sources mentioned.

A PROBLEM CHILD, AND THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ITS INTEGRATION INTO INDONESIA ARE ALL THE STRONGER. THOUGH IT STILL REMAINS IN OUR INTEREST TO STEER CLEAR OF BECOMING INVOLVED IN ITS FUTURE, DEVELOPMENTS IN LISBON SEEM NOW TO ARGUE IN FAVOUR OF GREATER SYMPATHY TOWARDS INDONESIA SHOULD THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT FEEL FORCED TO TAKE STRONG ACTION BY THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

“CERTAINLY AS SEEN FROM HERE IT IS IN BRITAIN’S INTEREST THAT INDONESIA SHOULD ABSORB THE TERRITORY AS SOON AS AND AS UNOBTRUSIVELY AS POSSIBLE; AND THAT IF IT COME TO THE CRUNCH AND THERE IS A ROW IN THE UNITED NATIONS WE SHOULD KEEP OUR HEADS DOWN AND AVOID SIDING AGAINST THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT.”

The British are clearly sympathetic to the annexation of Portuguese Timor by Indonesia. While the Australians are convinced that an Indonesian takeover might be in the cards, the British state their interest in such a move. The Portuguese going through a convoluted phase of their Revolution, consider Timor to be a very low priority in their agenda, but at the same are being pressed by the new military regime implanted after 11 March 1975, to ‘get rid’ of all the colonies, thus the Indonesian takeover appeal to Lisbon.

After some months of consultation with political parties, the colonial administration of Timor gives way to new legislation and to an electoral process started at Lautém [East Coast]. Journalists, some diplomats, and other independent international observers consider the electoral process democratic. A high-level of voters’ participation, including women and the orderly manner of this first electoral process, impress and even surprises those observers. By August 10, 1975, the Portuguese Governor officially swore in the first Regional Shire Administrative Council of Lautém. The elections at local level comprising villages, ‘sucos’ [groups of villages] and at shire level give well-balanced results between UDT and FRETILIN candidates, with a sole APODETI [pro-integration political party] being elected for the Council.

Such a regional election does not please the Indonesian generals, who state they are not inclined to accept similar elections in the remaining twelve shires. Knowing that those elections are freely conducted in a democratic way, the Indonesian worry about the very poor popular support to the integrationist movement, thus deciding to stop such process at any price.

A few weeks earlier in July 1975, the Indonesian President publicly states that: ***“East Timor cannot become independent because it is economically unfeasible.”***

The President considers that “it is not feasible to continue links with Portugal so that the only real alternative is integration with Indonesia.” Such statements are vented immediately after his return from a trip to the USA, Canada, Japan, Iran, and Yugoslavia.

II) THE COUP

UDT leaders leave for Jakarta on 10 August 1975. UDT stages a coup d'état that night. Its forces control the Dili Airport, Radio Marconi [in charge of international communications], the local broadcaster, the Military Centre of Transmissions and Communications, and the Police Force Headquarters. They are also demanding the immediate imprisonment of all FRETILIN leaders and an immediate transition of all powers to UDT.

Nobody doubts that such an operation relies on the cooperation of some sectors. The position of Lt. Col Maggiolo Gouveia, head of the Police Forces, UDT sympathiser and member of the Decolonisation Commission of the Armed Forces Movement of Timor, and supporter of the deposed President Spínola might help explain the coup. It is also easy to understand the ultimatum given to Portugal, for a total declaration of independence, transfer of powers to UDT, and the threat of imprisoning all FRETILIN leaders. Although this marks a decisive turn in the initial UDT project of a long interval before independence, it has to be seen as a natural development. The radical faction of UDT, who ends the coalition and is very supportive of the Federation plans laid by General Spínola, is being driven away by the events in Portugal.

In Lisbon, the radical left controls the government of Vasco Gonçalves and becomes increasingly supportive of FRETILIN. The ASEAN nations, somewhat alarmed at the left-leaning of the new Portuguese Government, are much more inclined to support UDT, who sounds more moderate and more in line with the geopolitical feelings of the region. The coup can give them the so often mentioned stability in the area, with a neo-colonial independent Timor. For UDT to press ahead there must have been a strong promise of economic and financial support, otherwise, UDT leaders are shrewd enough to understand the lack of viability of an independent Timor.

Part of the wording of the ultimatum given to Portugal leaves no doubts whatsoever, that all FRETILIN leaders are to be detained and some Portuguese officers considered to be 'too much progressive' will be expelled. Among all ASEAN countries, Indonesia will be the main beneficiary. No more red threats, a very accommodating, moderate, financially and economically dependent "independent" Timor-Dili gives them stability and no direct involvement.

III) NO PORTUGUESE REACTION

The coup lasts about nine days, without the intervention of the Portuguese military. Governor Lemos Pires alleges it is only [?] a political and not a military conflict between Timorese, ordering his troops not to intervene. Of approximately 2,500 troops, only 80 of them are 100 percent operational. But another problem faces the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, due to the so-called "Timorisation" of the Army, the Portuguese officers are already very few, they are not trained in combat, used to a laid-back army lifestyle and not at all motivated to fight, when most of them are already counting down the days left to return to Portugal.

The road to civil war comes as not much of a surprise, when on August 19, FRETILIN forces take up arms to oppose the UDT coup, since the Portuguese authorities do not want to intervene. The army, constituted by Timorese officers, most of them with scant formal training and quick promotions to fill in for the Portuguese officers, anxious to return [to

Portugal], is divided by their tribal and cultural divisions, as well as by the recent politicising campaigns. With this coup, late in the evening of August, +10, Indonesia is finally able to achieve the first step of its “Operasi Komodo”: destabilising the situation in East Timor.

The restructuring of education, the administrative review and other decolonisation and progressive measures are halted. Between teachers and the population in general, the interest and enthusiastic approach to those measures makes it impossible for any divisive and destabilising attitude to survive. Probably a month later it would have been too late for Indonesia to create a civil war in the territory. Unfortunately for the East Timorese, some of UDT leaders believe they will attain independence if they obey the instructions of Indonesia, so when they realise how they are being tricked and how disastrous their attitude has been, it is too bloody late.

IV) PORTUGAL IS ALSO ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL WAR

The summer of 1975 is to be remembered in Portugal by the political instability and, because the new democratic regime is not yet consolidated, the country even faces a possible civil war. The situation in the African ex-colonies, especially in Angola, is very difficult and complex. It certainly is not easy to make such a tardy decolonisation, after fourteen years of colonial war and when so many countries, in line with their interests, are supporting and arming diverse groups of freedom fighters. The successive governments in Lisbon during 1975 have very little internal and international operational control since their preoccupation are more concentrated on internal Portuguese problems and on Angola where independence is finally declared on November 11, 1975, than on the East Timor situation. The only operational military power that Portugal has in East Timor is made of seventy parachutists who are non-Timorese, thus neutral in the conflict, and unable to take part in the armed conflict between UDT and FRETILIN.

In global political terms, the difficult situation that faces Portugal, in that long hot summer of 1975, and the enormous distance between Portugal and East Timor [18,000 km], makes it impossible to send in reinforcements. As administering power, Portugal is left with the option of trying a negotiated solution through the United Nations. Three days after the UDT coup d'état, the Lisbon Government sends a special official mission led by Major António Soares. Arriving at Jakarta, Major Soares is not allowed by the Indonesian authorities to go on to East Timor and is forced to return to Portugal. Locally, the Portuguese Governor Lemos Pires tries to dialogue with local Timorese leaders, almost with success.

When leaders of both parties, UDT and FRETILIN, make appeals to peace, Radio Atambua incites to violence and the dialogue is broken again. Faced with the Portuguese impotence and to stop all imprisonment and deaths provoked by UDT forces, FRETILIN members of the Armed Forces take over arms and control most of the territory. Some Portuguese officers are made prisoners for a few hours, then freed and delivered to the Officers' Mess. It is now August, 20 and the civil war between UDT and FRETILIN erupts.

A negotiated solution is still being pursued. The Portuguese Minister for Inter-territorial Coordination goes to New York on August, 22 to try with the help of the Secretary-General of the United Nations find a solution, then heads on to

Indonesia and Australia. A multinational peacekeeping force [including Portuguese, Australian, Indonesian and Malaysian Armed Forces] and even an Aid Committee, are being considered as options. The Indonesian Foreign Minister refuses these options and proposes to send in immediately Indonesian troops. Portugal as administering power rejects this offer to avoid the Indonesian military occupation of the territory.

V) PORTUGUESE HOSTAGES

Following Indonesian instructions, UDT forces imprison 23 Portuguese army officers who are then surrendered as hostages to the Indonesian authorities. Under crossfire on the harbour area where the remaining Portuguese troops are placed, fifteen days after the UDT coup d'état, a radio message claims that Indonesia has sent the destroyer "Mon Ictid" to pick up and 'place under security' the Portuguese Governor and his staff.

VI) THE PORTUGUESE WITHDRAWAL

Governor Lemos Pires moves with his staff on August 26, 1975, to Ataúro Island, trying to avoid becoming a hostage of any of the belligerent forces and to allow negotiations between a Ministerial Mission sent by Lisbon and the Timorese political parties. Ataúro Island, about 30 km north of the Dili Bay is also part of the territory. During this period, he also avoids the Indonesian trap of putting him under their protection or asking them for his protection. That and similar proposals made by the Indonesian are always flatly refused by the Portuguese administration.

Because of the August 11, UDT coup against the Portuguese administration and its leverage with Indonesian theories, which party ends losing up much of the popular support it has. On the other hand, FRETILIN becomes the only pro-independence movement with a broader popular support. Given the numeric and military supremacy of FRETILIN, UDT forces are forced to go back to the border between Portuguese Timor and the Indonesian side and eventually end asking for Indonesian protection.

VII) CIVIL WAR ENDS

About a month after its start, civil war ends on September 24, 1975, with UDT troops and two thousand and five hundred refugees are forced to cross the border with Indonesia. UDT leaders are nevertheless forced by its Indonesian 'protectors' to sign a document where they request the integration of East Timor in Indonesia. UDT leaders who are not in the territory at the time repudiate such request, stating that UDT leaders did it under duress as Indonesian prisoners. In fact, that is what became of them, corralled between FRETILIN fighters and Indonesian forces.

VIII) HOW THE MEDIA SAW THE COUP

The Northern Territory News offers the following headlines for that period:

Aug. 11 "Timor coup - moderates may have taken power; Secretary-general stranded in Darwin";

Aug. 12 "Guerrilla war! Horta's threat to take to the hills" (Ken White);

- Aug. 13 "272 on refugee's vessel." "Suharto wants stability." Late News: "Portuguese envoy here" [Darwin];
- Aug. 14 "Evacuees marched to ship at gunpoint";
- Aug. 15 "Refugees talk of fear and confusion" (Rex Clark); "Timor groups forms axis against link with Indonesia." Late News: Governor's wife flees Timor";
- Aug. 18 "100 killed in Timor fighting";
- Aug. 19 "Timor interview: UDT chief talks!" "After Timor it is us, Calder warns"; "Canberra aware of Timor coup almost from the beginning";
- Aug. 20 "Timor not our affair - Canberra."

After the initial hesitation, and with the local government incapable of being respected or heard by the parties, fighting becomes more endemic. With both parties 'heavily' armed with G-3 machine guns, old Mauser rifles dating back from World War II, and other assorted and antiquated armoury that equipped the Portuguese garrison in Timor, everyone is asked to make an option.

Some Portuguese Army Officers join UDT (like Lt. Col Maggiolo Gouveia), some others prefer to join FRETILIN, without abandoning their Portuguese Army rank and uniform. The government in Timor is only nominally Portuguese. Some attempts to evacuate the civilian population are by then progressing under fire, with some casualties. Terrorist actions are practised by both warring parties. UDT tries to control all means of communication and transport. FRETILIN is accused of tortures and massacres. Some refugees make it, some cannot even attempt it. The recently acquired ship "MacDili," to increase commercial operations between Macao and Timor, with a full capacity of 120 passengers heads to Darwin with 800 people. The threat of hunger gathers momentum.

Dili is still Portuguese, but only in a small neutral zone, comprising the Officers' Mess and the three houses behind it, where the Military Commanders live, and a small stretch of the Dili Harbour installations nearby. There, took refuge as many as possible. Not all of them escape alive. Snipe fire, looting, destruction, rocket and mortar artillery, bombing and the capital city of Dili is now divided between UDT and FRETILIN. Another eight days are gone.

IX) AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMACY MANOEUVRES

It is now August 27. Following the events through another prism let me take you back to a series of dispatches between Ambassador Woolcott and some other key figures. General Panggabean was the [Indonesian] Minister for Defence (he played little part in the war, and something of a figurehead in his own Ministry). Major-General Ali Murtopo, a key associate of President Suharto, is the founder of "Operasi Komodo" in October 1974 to take charge of all East Timorese matters. Murtopo is equally the Deputy Head of BAKIM (the State Intelligence Coordinating Body).

"12 August 1975 SECRET: PORTUGUESE TIMOR

TO DJAKARTA REPEAT LISBON FROM CANBERRA

Following is the text of a submission to Minister as referred to in our immediately preceding telegram.

BEGINS:

"THE PORTUGUESE TIMOR SITUATION IS STILL OBSCURE. IT APPEARS THAT THE PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATION IN DILI IS STILL FUNCTIONING BUT THAT UDT IS IN CONTROL OF MOST OF TIMOR'S COMMUNICATION LINKS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. WE HAVE SPOKEN TO THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR [Dr António Cabrita Matias]. HE ASKED THAT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM HIM SHOULD BE CAREFULLY SAFEGUARDED AS HE IS AVOIDING ALL CONTACTS WITH THE PRESS. ACCORDING TO THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR WHO HAS RECEIVED HIS INFORMATION THROUGH MACAO:

"UDT MADE ITS MAJOR MOVE ON THE NIGHT OF 10 AUGUST WHEN IT TOOK OVER THE DILI POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND CAPTURED THE COMMANDER AND SOME ARMS. UDT THEN TOOK CONTROL OF THE HARBOUR, THE AIRPORTS AT BOTH DILI AND BAUCAU, THE RADIO STATION AND OTHER COMMUNICATION FACILITIES. THE OPERATION WAS APPARENTLY AN EFFICIENT ONE, WITH NO BLOODSHED."

"AGAIN, ACCORDING TO THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR: "UDT IS SAID TO BE EXERCISING CONTROL OVER THE TIMOR POLICE FORCE. IT SEEMS, HOWEVER, THAT THE MILITARY FORCES, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE GOVERNOR, HAVE REMAINED ON THE SIDELINES NOT CONTESTING THE UDT SHOW OF FORCE. THE GOVERNOR IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN "DIALOGUE" WITH UDT AND ALSO WITH FRETILIN."

"THE PORTUGUESE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THERE WILL SOON BE A RETURN TO NORMALITY. THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR HAS SPECULATED TO US THAT LISBON MIGHT SEND AN EMISSARY URGENTLY TO DILI TO BEGIN TALKS WITH UDT AND THE OTHER TIMORESE POLITICAL GROUPS. HE DESCRIBED THE PRESENT SITUATION AS CALM, AND THERE IS APPARENTLY FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITHIN DILI. THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO SPECULATED THAT THE EVENTS IN DILI MIGHT HAVE BEEN PRECIPITATED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN LISBON. HE BELIEVES THAT THE EXCLUSION OF MODERATE OFFICERS IN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, FROM THE NEW PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AND THE Revolutionary COUNCIL MIGHT HAVE LED TO FEARS ON THE PART OF UDT THAT GOVERNOR Pires WAS ABOUT TO BE REPLACED WITH A RADICAL OFFICER WHO WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO FRETILIN."

"THE AMBASSADOR ADDS THAT UDT FEARS COULD HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED BY A MESSAGE SENT TO LISBON LAST WEEK BY THE STUDENT WING OF FRETILIN DEMANDING THE REMOVAL OF Pires FROM OFFICE. IF THE AMBASSADOR IS RIGHT, THEN IT SEEMS UDT STAGED ITS MOVE IN ORDER TO PRE-EMPT WHAT IT BELIEVED MIGHT BE A LISBON SUPPORTED FRETILIN BID FOR POWER. IT IS CLEAR FROM OTHER REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED THAT UDT WAS DISTURBED BY EVENTS IN PORTUGAL. THE EXCLUSION OF MAJORS ANTUNES AND ALVES [Major Melo Antunes and Major Vítor Alves, were probably the two main ideologues of the Armed Forces Movement]. FROM THE NEW GOVERNMENT, AND THE EARLIER RESIGNATIONS OF Dr Soares AND ALMEIDA SANTOS, MEANT THAT

MOST OF THOSE PREVIOUSLY ASSOCIATED WITH PORTUGAL'S MODERATE LINE ON TIMOR HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM POWER IN LISBON.

"THE INDONESIAN REACTION TO THE EVENTS IN DILI IS AMBIVALENT. THERE SEEMS TO BE GENUINE SURPRISE IN THE INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. HARRY TJAN [a leading personality in the Catholic Party of Indonesia] ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN UNAWARES. BUT OTHER VERY DELICATE SOURCES (WHICH ARE BEING BROUGHT TO YOUR ATTENTION SEPARATELY) SUGGEST THAT UDT ACTED WITH AT LEAST SOME FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE STATE INTELLIGENCE Coordination BODY (BAKIM)."

UDT APPEALS FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA HELP.

"IN THIS CONNECTION, TOO, WE SHOULD RECORD THAT BROADCASTS, FROM THE UDT CONTROLLED RADIO, IN DILI, HAVE APPEALED TO "ALL NATIONS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA REGION" TO SEND HELP TO UDT, INCLUDING ARMED FORCES AND WEAPONS. ACCORDING TO THE BROADCASTS, THIS HELP IS NEEDED TO FORESTALL ANY COUNTER MOVE BY THE PORTUGUESE MAJORS Mota AND JÓNATAS [Members of the Decolonisation Commission], WHO HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED IN THE BROADCASTS AS AIMING TO "DELIVER TIMOR TO THE MARXIST FRETILIN." THE BROADCASTS PROVIDE THE PRETEXT FOR INDONESIAN INTERVENTION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. ALL THIS STOPS WELL SHORT OF PROOF OF INDONESIAN COLLUSION WITH UDT. BUT IF THE INDONESIAN (S) WERE INTENDING TO INTERVENE, THEY COULD HAVE HARDLY STAGE-MANAGED THE SCENE ANY BETTER."

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS

"WE ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH HOW MANY AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS ARE CURRENTLY IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. THERE COULD BE UP TO A DOZEN OR SO RESIDENT THERE, AND IN ADDITION AS MANY OF 30 TOURISTS. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY VIOLENCE THUS FAR, THERE SEEMS NO IMMEDIATE NEED TO THINK IN TERMS OF EMERGENCY EVACUATION, BUT WE HAVE HAD SOME CONTINGENCY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENCE AND TRANSPORT ON POSSIBLE EVACUATION SHOULD THE SITUATION BEGIN TO DETERIORATE RAPIDLY. WE HAVE ALSO STRESSED TO THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR OUR EXPECTATIONS THAT THE PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES IN DILI WOULD REGARD THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AS A HIGH PRIORITY. THE AMBASSADOR UNDERTOOK TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY ASSURANCES FROM LISBON AND DILI."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"(A) ON THE POLITICAL Front WE CAN DO NO MORE AT PRESENT THAN KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. "

"(B) WE BELIEVE THAT APPROVAL SHOULD BE SOUGHT FROM THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION TO ADMIT EVACUEES FROM TIMOR IN RESPONSE TO A PORTUGUESE REQUEST AND PROVIDED THAT THE

PORTUGUESE GIVE THE NECESSARY ASSURANCES REGARDING THE COSTS OF LOOKING AFTER THE EVACUEES IN AUSTRALIA AND EVENTUALLY REPATRIATING THEM EITHER BACK TO TIMOR OR TO PORTUGAL."

"(C) IN REGARD TO AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS IN TIMOR, WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DISCUSS WITH THE DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENCE AND TRANSPORT PLANNING FOR A POSSIBLE EVACUATION OPERATION WITH THE TIMING OF ANY EVACUATION TO BE DECIDED UPON IN THE LIGHT OF BOTH DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND IN TIMOR AND ANY DECISION TAKEN BY THE PORTUGUESE TO EVACUATE THEIR OWN CITIZENS.

"(D) FINALLY WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE A SHORT PRESS RELEASE UNDERLINING ITS CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR."

Told that the Australian Prime Minister might communicate to President Suharto Australia's opposition to the use of force by Indonesia, Woolcott argues strongly against such a move. Woolcott pleads that it will be easier to negotiate with Indonesia than with Portugal or East Timor on the seabed border, where oil exploration might take place. Another curious exchange is the following:

17 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

For Secretary [Alan Renouf] from Woolcott

"THANK YOU FOR VERY PROMPT RESPONSE TO MY [CABLE]. UNLESS THERE IS A DRAMATIC TURN OF EVENTS BEFORE TUESDAY MORNING [19 AUGUST] MORNING, I SHALL BE LEAVING AS SCHEDULED. THIS IS A LARGE AND COMPLEX COUNTRY AND, LIKE YOU, I ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO THE TRAVEL PROGRAM AND TO MAKING CONTACTS AND EMPHASISING AUSTRALIA'S INTEREST IN INDONESIA OUTSIDE JAVA.

"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 ADAM MALIK [Indonesian Foreign Minister] ADMITTED TO ME ON FRIDAY.

"I BELIEVE THE INDONESIAN (S) ARE WELL AWARE OF OUR ATTITUDES TO TIMOR AT ALL LEVELS. INDONESIA IS SIMPLY NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE RISKS THEY SEE TO THEM IN AN INDEPENDENT TIMOR AND I DO NOT BELIEVE WE WILL BE ABLE TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS ON THIS. WE HAVE IN FACT TRIED TO DO SO. WHAT INDONESIA NOW LOOKS TO FROM AUSTRALIA IN THE PRESENT SITUATION IS SOME UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR ATTITUDE AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ASSIST PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING IN AUSTRALIA RATHER THAN ACTION ON OUR PART WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO CRITICISM OF INDONESIA.

"THEY BELIEVE THEY WILL GET THIS UNDERSTANDING ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION, INCLUDING FROM JAPAN AND

NEW ZEALAND. THE DEPARTMENT SEEMS TO HAVE ATTACHED MORE WEIGHT TO MY DISCUSSIONS WITH MALIK THAN TO THE PREVIOUS DISCUSSION WITH YOGA [General Yoga Sugama, Head of BAKIM]. THIS IS PROBABLY RIGHT BUT ONLY IN RELATION TO INDONESIA'S IMMEDIATE INTENTIONS. IN THE LONGER RUN, I CONSIDER THAT THE COMMENTS IN PARAS 22-29 IN OUR [cable] ARE MORE RELEVANT TO THE LONGER TERM SITUATION WE ARE LIKELY TO FACE.

"THE "DOVES," LIKE MALIK, HOPE THAT THE INCORPORATION OF TIMOR CAN BE EFFECTED IN A REASONABLY PRESENTABLE MANNER OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. THE "HAWKS" DO NOT BELIEVE PORTUGAL WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE SITUATION OR BE WILLING TO MAINTAIN A "MEASURED AND DELIBERATE APPROACH TO DECOLONISATION" WHICH WOULD "EVENTUALLY" ENABLE THE PEOPLE TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE. EVENTS IN ANGOLA AND PORTUGAL ITSELF, OF COURSE, STRENGTHEN THEIR HAND. THEY MAINTAIN THE SITUATION BOTH IN LISBON AND IN TIMOR WILL DETERIORATE AND THAT IF IT DOES IT IS BETTER TO MOVE EARLIER THAN LATER.

"IN CONSIDERING WHETHER OR NOT THERE SHOULD BE ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE PRESIDENT WE SHOULD ALSO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT FORMALLY ANSWERED THE PRIME MINISTER'S MARCH LETTER ALTHOUGH IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT HE DID SO ORALLY IN TOWNSVILLE [2-3 April]. I AM SURE THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT WELCOME ANOTHER LETTER ON THIS 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.

"THE MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER MAY FEEL THAT DOMESTIC PRESSURE PUTS AUSTRALIA UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO ACT. ONE ANSWER TO THIS WOULD BE THAT AUSTRALIA HAS ALREADY MADE MORE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT AND BEEN MORE ACTIVE IN MAKING ITS SERIOUS CONCERN KNOWN TO THE INDONESIAN (S), THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY. THE UPSHOT OF THIS IS THAT AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN SINGLED OUT BY THE INDONESIAN (S) IN THEIR PLANNING DISCUSSIONS AS THE COUNTRY (ALONG WITH CHINA) THAT WILL BE THE MOST VOCAL IN THE EVENT OF INDONESIA INTERVENTION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

"THEY KNOW THAT REACTION IN AUSTRALIA - UNLIKE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES AND NEW ZEALAND - WILL PROBABLY BE THEIR MAIN PROBLEM. I DOUBT WHETHER WE CAN EXPECT A BETTER RESULT THAN THAT. 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 NEIGHBOURING 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 VERY MUCH PART OF THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO.

“WHILE THE SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR IS NOT LIKELY TO GET AS BAD AS THAT IN ANGOLA, IT IS GOING TO BE A MESS FOR SOME TIME. FROM HERE I WOULD SUGGEST THAT OUR POLICIES SHOULD BE BASED ON DISENGAGING OURSELVES AS FAR AS POSSIBLE FROM THE TIMOR QUESTION; GETTING AUSTRALIANS PRESENTLY THERE OUT OF TIMOR; LEAVE EVENTS TO TAKE THEIR COURSE; AND IF AND WHEN INDONESIA DOES INTERVENE ACT IN A WAY WHICH WOULD BE DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE THE PUBLIC IMPACT IN AUSTRALIA AND SHOW PRIVATELY UNDERSTANDING TO INDONESIA OF THEIR PROBLEMS.

“PERHAPS WE SHOULD ALSO MAKE AN EFFORT TO SECURE THROUGH PARLIAMENT AND THE MEDIA A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POLICY, AND INDONESIA’S, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT WANT TO BECOME APOLOGISTS FOR INDONESIA. THE UNITED STATES MIGHT HAVE SOME INFLUENCE ON INDONESIA AT PRESENT AS INDONESIA REALLY WANTS AND NEEDS UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE IN ITS MILITARY RE-EQUIPMENT PROGRAM. BUT AMBASSADOR NEWSOM TOLD ME LAST NIGHT THAT HE IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM KISSINGER PERSONALLY NOT TO INVOLVE HIMSELF IN DISCUSSIONS ON TIMOR WITH THE INDONESIAN (S) ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS INVOLVED IN ENOUGH PROBLEMS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE OVERSEAS AT PRESENT.

“THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS, WE UNDERSTAND, INSTRUCTED THE EMBASSY TO CUT DOWN IT’S REPORTING ON TIMOR. I WILL BE SEEING NEWSOM ON MONDAY BUT HIS PRESENT ATTITUDE IS THAT UNITED STATES SHOULD KEEP OUT OF THE PORTUGUESE TIMOR SITUATION AND ALLOW EVENTS TO TAKE THEIR COURSE. HIS SOMEWHAT CYNICAL COMMENT TO ME WAS THAT “IF INDONESIA WERE TO INTERVENE THE UNITED STATES WOULD HOPE THEY WOULD DO SO EFFECTIVELY, QUICKLY AND NOT USE OUR EQUIPMENT.”

“WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE INTEREST IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR SITUATION BUT I WONDER WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT HAS ASCERTAINED THE INTEREST OF THE MINISTER OR 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 ABOUT⁶⁵.** AS EVEN THOSE COUNTRIES WITH IDEOLOGICAL BASES FOR THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES, LIKE CHINA AND SOVIET UNION, HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED. I AM SORRY TO RAISE ALL THESE ISSUES AGAIN WITH YOU PERSONALLY BUT I DO HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF ANOTHER PRIME MINISTERIAL MESSAGE AT THIS STAGE. YOU MAY WISH TO SHOW THIS TO THE MINISTER AND*

⁶⁵ Author’s underline.

PRIME MINISTER AND TO REPEAT IT TO COOPER [R. L. COOPER, Australian Ambassador] IN LISBON."

The next day, Woolcott reports that President Suharto does not intend to intervene militarily at this stage. The Portuguese Government has sent, in the meantime, Major António Soares to mediate between opposing groups in Dili, reaching Bali on 15 August, where he is thereby informed by the Indonesian that he cannot proceed to Dili.

"18 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

TO CANBERRA REPEAT LISBON FROM DJAKARTA

"I TALKED LAST NIGHT, 17 AUGUST, WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR [Kuznetsov] WHO HAS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM MOSCOW, THE PORTUGUESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES [Dr Souza-Girão], AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, GENERAL PANGGABEAN. I ALSO SPOKE THIS MORNING, 18 AUGUST, BRIEFLY WITH THE PRESIDENT AND AT SOME LENGTH WITH UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR NEWSOM.

"ON BASIS OF THESE MOST RECENT DISCUSSIONS I WOULD LIKE TO PUT FORWARD THE FOLLOWING VIEWS BEFORE LEAVING FOR SUMATRA. THE PRESIDENT IS AT PRESENT FIRM IN HIS ATTITUDE THAT INDONESIA SHOULD NOT INTERVENE MILITARILY IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR AT THIS STAGE. THE FIRMNESS WITH WHICH HE HOLDS THIS ATTITUDE AT PRESENT HAS SURPRISED AND, I BELIEVE, IRRITATED HANKAN [The Minister of Defence] AND GENERAL YOGA [General Yoga Sugama, Head of BAKIM].

"CONCERN ABOUT AUSTRALIA'S REACTION, THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING IN LIMA [Peruvian capital], THE FORTHCOMING SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND HIS WISH TO CONCENTRATE INDONESIA'S RESOURCES ON "REPELITA II" ARE ALL FACTORS IN HIS PRESENT ATTITUDE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE HAS BACKED AWAY FROM HIS DECISION THAT TIMOR SHOULD BE INCORPORATED BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OF INDONESIAN INTERVENTION UNLESS THERE IS A REAL BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER IN TIMOR.

"UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION WILL SEEK TO AVOID ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PORTUGUESE TIMOR ISSUE ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR NEWSOM CONSIDERS THAT INDONESIA'S NEED FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND LIKELY CONGRESSIONAL DISQUIET ABOUT INDONESIAN INTERVENTION COULD, IN ITSELF, EXERCISE AN INFLUENCE ON THE PRESIDENT TO MOVE TOWARDS THE INCORPORATION OF TIMOR AS CAUTIOUSLY AND SUBTLY AS POSSIBLE, UNLESS THERE IS A BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER IN THE COLONY.

"YOGA'S FEARS OF EARLY SOVIET RECOGNITION OF A UDT DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE SEEM AS ILL FOUNDED AS I HAVE SUSPECTED THEY WERE. ACCORDING TO DR. GIRÃO, MAJOR SOARES IS ANGRY AT HIS TREATMENT HERE. STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM IN THE LIGHT OF MALIK'S ATTITUDE, MALIK DID NOT SEE SOARES BEFORE SOARES LEFT FOR BALI WHERE HE HAS BEEN HELD FOR TWO DAYS. AS OF LAST NIGHT HE HAD STILL BEEN UNABLE TO FLY TO KUPANG [capital of West Timor] AND INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN UNCOOPERATIVE TO AN EXTENT

WHICH HAS LED SOARES TO BELIEVE THEY ARE OBSTRUCTING HIM IN HIS EFFORTS TO REACH TIMOR.

“DESPITE WHAT YOGA TOLD ME ABOUT INDONESIA’S NON-INVOLVEMENT WHICH IS, AS YOU KNOW, SUPPORTED BY SENSITIVE SOURCE MATERIAL. PORTUGUESE CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES IS CONVINCED THAT INDONESIA WAS INVOLVED IN THE UDT COUP THROUGH ALI MURTOPO [Deputy Head of BAKIM] WHOM HE CONSIDERS TO BE IN LEAGUE WITH UDT, POSSIBLY EVEN WITHOUT YOGA’S OR MALIK’S KNOWLEDGE. DR. GIRÃO SUGGESTS THAT SOME TIME AGO ALI DECIDED APODETI COULD NOT DELIVER TIMOR TO INDONESIA AND THAT THE REAL DANGER TO INDONESIA’S ASPIRATIONS IN TIMOR WAS FRETILIN. HE THEREFORE STARTED TO BUY OFF MEMBERS OF UDT AND MAKE SECRET ARRANGEMENTS WITH THEM. (I ADMIT THIS ADDS A JAVANESE MACHIAVELLIAN DIMENSION OF INTRIGUE TO AN ALREADY CONFUSED SITUATION. I CAN ONLY SAY AT THIS STAGE THAT IT IS PLAUSIBLE, IF UNLIKELY. DAN WILL TRY AND EXPLORE THIS FURTHER LATER IN THE WEEK).

“BOTH MAJOR SOARES AND PRESIDENT GOMES WANTED, ACCORDING TO DR. GIRÃO THE ARMY OUT OF TIMOR AND WOULD PROBABLY NOW ACCEPT A UDT “GOVERNMENT.” DR. GIRÃO ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE NOW THAT PORTUGAL WOULD RE-ESTABLISH FIRM CONTROL IN TIMOR AND REMAIN LONG ENOUGH TO PERMIT AN EVENTUAL DECISION BY THE PEOPLE ON THEIR OWN FUTURE. HE SAID THAT EVEN BEFORE THE UDT ACTION PRESIDENT GOMES HAD REGARDED TIMETABLE AS “FLEXIBLE.” COOPER [Australian Ambassador to Portugal] MAY WISH TO COMMENT ON THIS.”

Four days later, Woolcott relays a conversation between General Yoga Sugama and the American Ambassador, NEWSOM. In this conversation, General Yoga makes the extraordinary assertion that the Portuguese Socialist Party is aligned with Moscow and the Portuguese Communist Party with Peking. Such drew a sharp rebuff from B. L. COOPER, Australia’s Ambassador in Lisbon, who stresses that the Portuguese Socialists are members of the International Socialist, thus opposing the Portuguese Communists who are hard-liners of the pro-Moscow allegiance.”

“22 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

To Canberra Repeat Lisbon, Washington From Djakarta

“UNITED STATES EMBASSY DEPUTY RIEVES CALLED ON DAN 21 AUGUST. HE SAID AMERICAN AMBASSADOR NEWSOM HAD BEEN GIVEN A BRIEFING ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR BY GENERAL YOGA SUGAMA (BAKIM) ON 20 AUGUST. RIEVES ALLOWED US TO TAKE NOTES OF NEWSOM’S CABLED REPORT. FOLLOWING IS OUR RECONSTRUCTION OF IT.

“YOGA SAID THAT BAKIM AND THE C.I.A. HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF ENGINEERING RECENT EVENTS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. HE STRONGLY DENIED THIS. THERE WAS A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND INDONESIA THAT THE DECOLONISATION PROCESS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN A MANNER REFLECTING THE WILL OF PEOPLE AND WITHOUT DISTURBING POLITICAL STABILITY. PORTUGAL HAD A MORAL

OBLIGATION TO PREPARE THE PEOPLE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR FOR THE END OF PORTUGUESE SOVEREIGNTY. YOGA OUTLINED THREE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS:

“FIRST, IF UDT PROVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE PRESENT STRUGGLE FRETILIN WOULD REACT AND APODETI WOULD INEVITABLY BE DRAWN IN. A CHAOTIC SITUATION WOULD UNFOLD OFFERING WIDE RANGING POSSIBILITIES FOR OUTSIDE POWERS TO HAVE DIRECT OR INDIRECT INFLUENCE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. IN THIS RESPECT YOGA MENTIONED THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA.”

“SECONDLY, IF UDT UNDERTOOK ACTION IN CONCERT WITH GROUPS IN PORTUGAL THEN A FUTURE INDEPENDENT PORTUGUESE TIMOR COULD NOT BE NEUTRAL. IT WOULD BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THESE GROUPS IN PORTUGAL ITSELF. THIRDLY, IF UDT AND APODETI HAD UNITED TO FIGHT FRETILIN THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING.” YOGA SAID THAT UDT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS SOCIALIST AND FRETILIN AS COMMUNIST.

“THE SOCIALISTS IN LISBON WERE PRO-MOSCOW WHILE THE COMMUNISTS WERE PRO-PEKING. BAKIM HAD PROOF THAT UDT WAS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE SOCIALIST GROUP IN LISBON. INDONESIA HAD BEEN UNABLE TO CLARIFY FROM THE PORTUGUESE THE SITUATION IN TIMOR. IT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT SAW AS ITS OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR OR HOW PORTUGAL INTENDED TO FULFIL ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

“NEWSOM SAID THAT THE AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS MAINTAINED IDEOLOGICAL TIES WITH OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS RATHER THAN WITH MOSCOW. HE SAID THE RECENT ELECTION RESULTS IN PORTUGAL AND CURRENT TRENDS THERE WERE GENERALLY OF A NON-COMMUNIST CHARACTER. YOGA INSISTED THAT THE SOCIALISTS WERE PRO-MOSCOW AND THE COMMUNISTS PRO-PEKING. TURNING TO THE RECENT VISIT OF MAJOR SOARES, YOGA SAID THAT SOARES HAD ENTERED INDONESIA WITHOUT A VISA AND THAT THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NO FOREWARNING OR EXPLANATION OF HIS PRESENCE IN INDONESIA.

“THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAD FAILED TO SUPPORT THE STATEMENT THAT HE WAS AN EMISSARY OF THE PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT. WHILE THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT WAS ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY THIS, SOARES TRIED TO “SNEAK OUT” TO DENPASAR. SOARES CLAIMED TO HAVE A LETTER FROM THE PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT BUT BAKIM HAD DETERMINED THAT THE LETTER WAS NOT SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT.

“(NOTE: WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT BAKIM AGENTS SEARCHED HIS LUGGAGE). SOARES WAS BELIEVED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST GROUP (THAT IS, PRO-MOSCOW.) YOGA ASKED FOR A STATEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES POSITION ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR. NEWSOM SAID HE WAS IN A POSITION TO MAKE AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT BY VIRTUE OF INSTRUCTIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED (NOTE: ON 19 AUGUST):

“FIRST THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ANXIOUS TO BE INVOLVED IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR IN ANY WAY. APART

FROM NORMAL HUMANITARIAN CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF THE POPULATION AND THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, THE MAIN UNITED STATES INTEREST WAS IN THE IMPACT OF ANY CHANGE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR ON UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA.

“SECONDLY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE MERGER OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR WITH INDONESIA, ASSUMING THAT THIS WAS DESIRED BY THE LOCAL POPULATION.

“THIRDLY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT THE ISSUE SHOULD BE DETERMINED BY THE INHABITANTS AND TIMOR’S NEIGHBOURS. THUS, PEACEFUL MERGER WOULD CAUSE NO PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES. PROBLEMS COULD ARISE IF THERE WERE A FORCIBLE SEIZURE. THIS COULD RAISE DIFFICULTIES OF A KIND ENCOUNTERED WITH TURKEY ON THE QUESTION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY IF UNITED STATES MILITARY EQUIPMENT WERE USED BY INDONESIA IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. WHILE THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT WAS ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY THIS, SOARES TRIED TO “SNEAK OUT” TO DENPASAR.

“NEWSOM SAID THAT IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO PRESSURE THE OUTCOME IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER BUT THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE AWARE THAT IF UNITED STATES EQUIPMENT WERE USED THIS COULD CALL INTO EFFECT SECTIONS OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT. THIS COULD PLACE THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN INDONESIA IN JEOPARDY. THUS, THE BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE THE PEACEFUL INCORPORATION OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR INTO INDONESIA. NEWSOM ASKED WHETHER PORTUGAL COULD REASSURE ITS CONTROL IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR OR WHETHER NEGOTIATIONS WERE POSSIBLE WITH THE LEADERSHIP GROUPS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. YOGA SAID HE FIRST WANTED TO MAKE THREE POINTS CONCERNING INDONESIAN INTENTIONS:

“THE FIRST WAS THAT INDONESIA WOULD NOT PROVOKE THE SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR NOR LAUNCH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST HER “PEACEFUL NEIGHBOURS.”

“SECONDLY, INDONESIA WOULD NOT ABANDON HER CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES. INDONESIA HAD NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS.

“THIRDLY, IF INDONESIA HAD TO ACT SHE WOULD DO SO ONLY IF SHE FELT ENDANGERED AND PROVOKED. IF INDONESIA WAS OBLIGED TO ACT, SHE WOULD PRODUCE THE PROOF (OF THE DANGER AND PROVOCATION). INDONESIA PLACED TOO HIGH A VALUE ON HER FOREIGN RELATIONS TO RISK AGGRESSION, AND THAT WAS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED PORTUGAL TO CARRY OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

“YOGA SAID THERE HAD BEEN SIGNS THAT UDT HAD ASKED PORTUGAL TO PUT AN END TO THE PRESENT CONFRONTATION OF FORCES IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. IF UDT DISCOVERED THAT PORTUGAL WAS NOT WILLING TO INTERVENE UDT MIGHT INVITE INTERVENTION BY OUTSIDE FORCES IN THE NEIGHBOURING REGION. THERE

WAS EVEN A POSSIBILITY THAT PORTUGAL WOULD SAY THAT IT WAS TOO FAR AWAY AND WOULD ASK INDONESIA TO RESTORE ORDER IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

“INDONESIA MUST KNOW THE ATTITUDE AND OPINIONS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SINCE FOUR OR FIVE YEARS FROM NOW PORTUGUESE TIMOR MAY BE PRO-SOVIET UNION AND PRO-CHINA AND THEN THE PROBLEM WOULD NOT BE INDONESIA’S ALONE.

“NEWSOM SAID HE WISHED TO CLARIFY HIS EARLIER STATEMENT ABOUT THE USE OF UNITED STATES MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE DETERMINATION OF WHAT THE UNITED STATES POSITION MAY BE DID NOT REST ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. THERE WERE OTHER BODIES IN THE UNITED STATES (HE ALLUDED TO CONGRESS) WHICH HAD AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE.

“YOGA SAID HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THIS. NEWSOM ASKED ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN POSITION. YOGA SAID IT WAS NOT FAR FROM THE UNITED STATES POSITION. AUSTRALIA HAD BEEN TOLD THAT INDONESIA WOULD STICK TO HER PROMISES, THAT INDONESIA WAS NOT AN AGGRESSOR BUT THAT IF ENDANGERED INDONESIA WOULD HAVE TO ACT AND IN THAT EVENT WOULD OFFER CLEAR PROOF OF THE DANGER. NEWSOM ASKED IF INDONESIA PERCEIVED THAT THE OPTION OF MERGER WITH INDONESIA HAD BECOME MORE POPULAR IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. YOGA REPLIED THAT IT HAD NOT GAINED MORE SUPPORT AND THAT ONLY APODETI FAVOURED INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT PORTUGUESE TIMOR AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE DID NOT MAKE SENSE AND THAT IT WOULD LOOK FOR OUTSIDE HELP AND PROBABLY GET AID FROM THE SOVIET UNION THEREBY ALLOWING THE SOVIET UNION TO ESTABLISH A Foothold IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

“NEWSOM ASKED IF INDONESIA ASSESSED THAT THE SOVIET UNION VALUED ITS RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA MORE THAN AN ADVENTURE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. YOGA DEPRECATED THIS, CALLING ATTENTION TO SOVIET ACTIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF ASIA AND AFRICA. NEWSOM ASKED WHETHER INDONESIA HAD CONSIDERED FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PORTUGUESE TIMOR LEADERSHIP AS A FACTOR IN THE SITUATION. YOGA SAID THAT INDONESIA HAD BEEN DOING THIS AND HAD PROVIDED WHEAT AND SUGAR BUT THIS HAD NOW STOPPED.”

“22 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

To Canberra Repeat Djakarta, Washington

From Lisbon

“IT IS DISTURBING THAT SUCH A SENIOR AND (PRESUMABLY) HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL PERSON AS YOGA COULD BE SO ‘MISINFORMED ABOUT PORTUGUESE POLITICS. IT IS SIMPLY NONSENSE TO SUGGEST AS YOGA DOES THAT “THE SOCIALISTS IN LISBON WERE PRO-MOSCOW WHILE THE COMMUNISTS WERE PRO-PEKING. AS YOU KNOW, CUNHAL [the Secretary-general of the Portuguese Communist Party] IS OFTEN ACCUSED OF BEING THE MOST MOSCOW ORIENTED LEADER OF ANY WEST EUROPEAN PARTY.

"ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOCIALISTS LED BY MÁRIO SOARES RECENTLY LEFT THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE PRINCIPAL REASON THAT THE M.F.A. [Armed Forces Movement] RADICALS LED BY PRIME MINISTER GONÇALVES SEEMED BENT ON ESTABLISHING A "POPULAR DEMOCRACY" ON THE EAST EUROPEAN MODEL. TO SUGGEST THAT THE SOCIALISTS ARE PRO-MOSCOW DISPLAYS A LAMENTABLE IGNORANCE OF THE PORTUGUESE POLITICAL SCENE. YOU MIGHT CONSIDER THE NEED TO TRY TO EDUCATE YOGA ON THE FACTS OF POLITICAL LIFE IN PORTUGAL. IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY IF ANY CRUCIAL INDONESIAN DECISIONS AFFECTING TIMOR WERE BASED ON SUCH BASICALLY FALSE PREMISES."

Cooper's cable brings a polite but unperturbed reply from Woolcott. The previous dispatches are self-explanatory.

"23 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

To Canberra Repeat Lisbon

From Djakarta

"WE SEEK AS OPPORTUNITIES PRESENT THEMSELVES TO KEEP INDONESIAN(s) UP TO DATE WITH INFORMATION WE HAVE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL. ONE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THAT THE INDONESIAN (PARTICULARLY IN BAKIM) ATTITUDE TOWARDS COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES IS VERY DIFFERENT TO OURS. THE INDONESIAN(s) ARE NOT GETTING MUCH INFORMATION FROM THEIR EMBASSY IN LISBON. IT SEEMS THAT THERE IS NOT MUCH UNDERSTANDING ON EITHER PREMISE ARE EXAGGERATED AND IN ANY CASE ANY "CRUCIAL INDONESIAN DECISION" WILL, AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT, BE TAKEN SOLELY BY THE PRESIDENT. AS TO CANBERRA'S QUESTION . . .

"I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER YOGA REALLY HOLDS THE VIEWS CONVEYED ABOUT PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS TO NEWSOM, OUR REPORT WAS SECOND-HAND FROM AMERICA'S DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION. ALSO "INDONESIA'S TREATMENT OF MAJOR SOARES" IS SLIGHTLY MORE COMPLEX THAN YOU HAVE SUGGESTED, AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT IN OTHER CABLES."

In yet another cable on that same day, Woolcott reports that the President is still opposed to military intervention but wants to know the Portuguese response to his offer to help restore law and order in Timor.

"23 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

TO CANBERRA REPEAT LISBON FROM DJAKARTA

"GENERAL ALI MURTOPO HAS TOLD ME THAT AT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO THIS AFTERNOON, [23 AUGUST, SATURDAY] THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN PRESIDENT'S POSITION. MINISTER SAW RAMOS HORTA ON EVENING OF 20 AUGUST. HORTA WAS GIVEN NO ENCOURAGEMENT FOR HIS PROPOSAL THAT AUSTRALIA, ALONE

OR WITH PORTUGAL AND INDONESIA, MIGHT INTERVENE IN SAME WAY IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. HORTA WAS VERY DESPONDENT, BELIEVING AT THE TIME FRETILIN'S STOCKS WERE VERY LOW."

On the same day, Woolcott reports Indonesian denials of claims that they are supporting UDT.

"23 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

TO CANBERRA REPEAT LISBON FROM DJAKARTA

"I ASKED LIM BIAN KIE [Right-hand man of Ali Murtopo's BAKIM] AND TJAN [Harry Tjan, a leading personality in the Catholic Party of Indonesia] TODAY (23 AUGUST) WHETHER THERE WAS ANY TRUTH IN THE STORY THAT INDONESIA WAS SUPPORTING UDT. EVENTS HAD MOVED TOO QUICKLY. THEY CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE STORY AND GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

"ON 21 JULY A MAJOR CARNABÁS [sic] ⁶⁶ FROM PORTUGAL MADE A "SECRET" VISIT TO DILI WHERE HE TALKED WITH MAJORS Mota AND JÓNATAS [Majors Francisco Mota and Silvério Jónatas, Members of Portuguese Decolonisation Commission in East Timor] AND WITH FRETILIN. THE INDONESIAN(S) DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS DISCUSSED BUT FEARED THAT CARNABÁS [sic] HAD GIVEN HIS BLESSING TO ACTION BY FRETILIN.

"ON 2 AUGUST JOÃO CARRASCALÃO AND DOMINGUES OLIVERES [sic] ⁶⁷ (SECRETARY-GENERAL OF UDT) HAD COME TO DJAKARTA TO MEET PARTY CHAIRMAN, LOPES DA CRUZ, AND TALK WITH THE INDONESIAN(S). THEY EXPRESSED FEARS THAT FRETILIN WAS PLANNING ACTION ON 21 AUGUST, SAID THEY WANTED TO PRE-EMPT THIS AND ASKED INDONESIA FOR ARMS. THEY GAVE NO INDICATION OF WHEN THEY (UDT) WOULD TAKE ACTION. THEY HAD RETURNED TO DILI ON 6 AUGUST VIA BALI AND KUPANG.

"INDONESIA'S RESPONSE WAS THAT ANY ACTION UDT TOOK WAS THEIR OWN BUSINESS, BUT IF IT WERE DIRECTED AGAINST COMMUNISTS, INDONESIA WOULD TURN A BLIND EYE. THE REQUEST FOR ARMS WAS REFUSED. BIAN KIE AND TJAN POINTED OUT THAT UDT WAS LED MOSTLY BY NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE. CARRASCALÃO CONSIDERED HE NEEDED LOPES DA CRUZ (WHO IS FULLY TIMORESE), BUT AFTER LOPES MADE SEVERAL MILDLY PRO-INDONESIAN STATEMENTS ON 17 AUGUST, HE WAS IMPRISONED BY CARRASCALÃO."

Australia's delegation to the United Nations in New York has been exploring the possibility of internationalising the situation in East Timor but reports little chance of success.

"23 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

⁶⁶ Major Barnabás

⁶⁷ Domingos de Oliveira

TO CANBERRA REPEAT DJAKARTA, LISBON FROM NEW YORK U.N.

“AT FIRST SIGHT DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF THE POSSIBLE INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE TIMOR SITUATION TEND TO PRESENT THEMSELVES RATHER THAN POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION. ACCEPTING THIS, AN OPERATION ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS APPEARS AT LEAST THEORETICALLY TO OFFER THE BEST PROSPECT OF OBTAINING RECOGNITION OF INDONESIA’S STANDING IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR, WHILE AVOIDING APPARENT PREJUDICE TO THE RIGHTS OF THE TIMORESE TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN FUTURE. COULD INDONESIA CAPITALISE ON THE EVACUATION BY MAKING AVAILABLE THE PERSONNEL TO ADMINISTER ON THE GROUND OF UNITED NATIONS RELIEF EFFORT?”

Simultaneously, the Indonesian are stepping up their case by using their Ambassador in Lisbon to express concern about events in Dili and passing on this concern to B. L. COOPER, the Australian Ambassador in Lisbon.

“23 AUGUST 1975 CONFIDENTIAL PORTUGUESE TIMOR

“INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR (SAY) TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT INDONESIAN CONSULATE DILI HAD BEEN “OCCUPIED” BY FRETILIN. AMBASSADOR HAD REQUESTED PORTUGUESE M.F.A. [MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS] TO INFORM FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRESIDENT.

“SAY COMMENTED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT REGARDED THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AS “MOST SERIOUS.” HE WAS UNABLE TO SAY WHETHER THE CONSUL AND HIS STAFF HAD BEEN ARRESTED, ONLY THAT THE PREMISES HAD BEEN OCCUPIED. THIS ACTION BY FRETILIN, COUPLED WITH REPORTS FROM THE PORTUGUESE RADIO THAT FRETILIN WERE MORTARING THE CITY RESULTING IN HUNDREDS OF DEATHS, SUGGESTS THAT THE PRESSURE ON THE INDONESIAN (S) TO ACT IS BECOMING ALMOST OVERWHELMING.”

A cable from Woolcott the next day clarifies the situation.

The Indonesian Consul is safe.

A copy is sent to Lima [Peru] because of Senator Willesee’s presence there.

“24 AUGUST 1975 SECRET TO CANBERRA REPEAT LISBON, LIMA FROM DJAKARTA

“I TALKED TO YOGA SUGAMA AND LIM BIAN KIE AND ADENAN (M.F.A.) [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] THIS MORNING, 24 AUGUST. THEY CONFIRM INDONESIAN CONSULATE HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY FRETILIN BUT DO NOT SEEM TO ATTACH QUITE SAME IMPORTANCE TO THIS AS COOPER AS AREA IN WHICH IT IS SITUATED HAS BEEN AN INSECURE AREA FOR SOME TIME AND CONSUL AND REMAINING STAFF HAVE BEEN IN THE PORT AREA. ALL THREE SAID THAT CONSUL HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REMAIN AT HIS POST BUT THAT THIS HAD BECOME IMPOSSIBLE. (DO WE KNOW IF HE IS ON THE LLOYD BAKKE OR THE MACDILI? [Ships evacuating Portuguese personnel from Dili]

"THE KEY ISSUE NOW ACCORDING TO ALL THREE IS NOT OCCUPATION OF CONSULATE BY FRETILIN BUT PORTUGUESE RESPONSE TO INDONESIAN OFFER TO ASSIST IN RESTORATION OF PEACE AND ORDER. INCIDENTALLY, YOGA SAID INDONESIAN SHIP PLUS "NAVAL ESCORT" WAS ALSO ON WAY TO DILI TO EVACUATE REFUGEES. I AGREE WITH COOPER THAT PRESSURES ON INDONESIA TO INTERVENE ARE GROWING. JUSTIFICATION FOR INTERVENTION WOULD ALSO BE EASIER NOW. BUT LATEST POSITION ACCORDING TO ALL THREE CONTACTS, INCLUDING YOGA, IS THAT INDONESIA STILL WANTS PORTUGUESE REQUEST TO DO SO BEFORE MOVING.

"24 AUGUST 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

TO CANBERRA REPEAT LISBON, LIMA FROM DJAKARTA

"THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM BAKIM IS THAT FRETILIN HAS CONTROL OF ABOUT HALF OF DILI, INCLUDING THE AREA IN WHICH THE INDONESIAN CONSULATE IS SITUATED, AND THAT UDT ALSO HAS CONTROL OF ABOUT HALF THE CITY. THE PORTUGUESE HAVE ASKED INDONESIA FOR ASSISTANCE TO RECEIVE REFUGEES, BOTH PORTUGUESE AND INDIGENOUS, ON THE BORDER OF INDONESIAN TIMOR."

By this time, it is clear that the attempted coup by the UDT grouping in Dili has completely misfired. Woolcott now speaks to the man directly concerned in the military organisation of the coming Indonesian takeover of East Timor, Lt. Gen. Benny Murdani, and he has an interview with Sudharmono, the Secretary of State and Secretary to the Cabinet - that is, the most direct channel to President Suharto.

"24 August 1975 SECRET PORTUGUESE TIMOR

TO CANBERRA REPEAT LISBON, LIMA FROM DJAKARTA

"IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF I ATTEMPT TO SUMMARISE MAIN ASPECTS OF TIMOR SITUATION AS OF SUNDAY MIDDAY AS SEEN FROM HERE. INDONESIA, IN PARTICULAR, PRESIDENT SUHARTO, HAS BEHAVED WITH RESTRAINT AND PRUDENCE IN THE SITUATION SO FAR. AS OF THIS MORNING, 24 AUGUST, PRESIDENT STILL DOES NOT WANT TO AUTHORISE INDONESIAN INTERVENTION UNLESS PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS OWN INABILITY TO RESTORE PEACE AND ORDER, AGREES WITH THIS COURSE.

"ANOTHER FACTOR WOULD BE THE ACCEPTANCE THAT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THE U.N. TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION. ADDITIONAL RESTRAINING FACTORS APART FROM POSSIBLE AUSTRALIAN AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS TO UNREQUESTED, UNILATERAL INDONESIAN INTERVENTION, IS THAT INDONESIAN FORCES COULD BE INVOLVED IN ACTION AGAINST BOTH FRETILIN AND UDT FORCES, WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY INVOLVE INDONESIAN CASUALTIES IN PRESENT CHARGED SITUATION.

"I HAVE ALSO NOW SPOKEN TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL BENNY MURDANI - ONE OF THE FEW SIGNIFICANT FIGURES

IN THE SITUATION HERE WHOM I HAVE PREVIOUSLY NOT CONTACTED AND HE - ALTHOUGH A WELL-KNOWN "HAWK" - REPEATED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT AUTHORISE INTERVENTION WITHOUT PORTUGAL'S RESPONSE TO INDONESIA'S OFFER TO RESTORE PEACE AND ORDER.

"BENNY MURDANI ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT RADIO AUSTRALIA REPORT THIS MORNING THAT GOVERNOR Pires HAD CALLED ON "INTERNATIONAL FORCES TO INTERVENE" ADDING THAT VIRTUALLY THE ONLY INTERNATIONAL FORCES IN A POSITION TO DO SO PROMPTLY, WOULD BE INDONESIAN. INDONESIA CANNOT STAND-BY FOR VERY LONG WHILE KILLING CONTINUES UNABATED AND ESPECIALLY IF IT STARTS TO INVOLVE APODETI AND ITS SUPPORTERS, PARTICULARLY INDIGENOUS TIMORESE SUPPORTERS OF INTEGRATION.

"IF INDONESIA DOES INTERVENE, EVEN WITHOUT A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE, - AND WE COULD BE MOVING TOWARDS THAT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR IF PORTUGAL DOES NOT RESPOND SOON - THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A NUMBER OF POINTS TO JUSTIFY THIS, NAMELY:

A)"APODETI HAS SO FAR TRIED TO STAY OUT OF THE CONFLICT;

B) ALTHOUGH IT WAS REJECTED AND INDONESIA PROBABLY KNEW IT WOULD BE - APODETI DID PROPOSE A REFERENDUM IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR AT THE MACAO MEETING;

C) FRETILIN BOYCOTTED THE MACAO MEETING AND IS APPARENTLY LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT MORTARING AND SHELLING IN DILI;

D) UDT PRECIPITATED THE COUP AND THE CONSEQUENT PROBLEMS WHILE, APODETI, AND INDONESIA HAVE HELD THEIR HANDS;

E) INDONESIA HAS OFFERED TO ASSIST THE PORTUGUESE IN RESTORING LAW AND ORDER AND HAS SHOWN RESTRAINT DURING THE PRESENT CRITICAL PERIOD, WHILE AWAITING PORTUGAL'S RESPONSE;

F) INDONESIA'S PUBLIC POSITION IN SUPPORT OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PEOPLE OF TIMOR TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FUTURE - AND, AS FAR AS THE PRESIDENT IS CONCERNED, HIS PRIVATE POSITION ALSO - SHOULD STAND UP QUITE WELL INTERNATIONALLY;

G) THE PRESENT SITUATION IS DUE NOT SO MUCH TO INDONESIA OR APODETI (DESPITE SOME EXCESSES IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH, ESPECIALLY ON THE PART OF APODETI, WHICH WERE CURTAILED PARTLY AS THE RESULT OF AUSTRALIAN INFLUENCE) AS IT IS TO A FAILURE OF PORTUGUESE CONTROL IN THE FACE OF PRECIPITATE ACTION BY UDT AND FRETILIN, THE LEADERSHIP OF BOTH OF WHICH ARE LARGELY NON-INDIGENOUS.

"SUDHARMONO AND BENNY MURDANI HAVE BOTH GIVEN ME THE ASSURANCE, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH IN THIS RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION, THAT IF INDONESIA DOES DECIDE TO "MOVE" THEN "AUSTRALIA WILL BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE," MURDANI SAID THAT WE SHOULD GET AT LEAST TWO HOURS NOTICE.

"THE CURRENT SITUATION RAISES AGAIN THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER WANTS ANY VIEWS COMMUNICATED TO THE PRESIDENT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON AUSTRALIAN REACTION TO INDONESIAN INTERVENTION ON THE ONE HAND.

"IN RESPONSE TO PORTUGUESE AGREEMENT THAT THEY SHOULD DO SO IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE LAW AND ORDER IF THIS IS FORTHCOMING AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, STAND-BY GUIDANCE IN THE EVENT THAT INDONESIA DOES FEEL OBLIGED TO INTERVENE WITHOUT A PORTUGUESE REQUEST OR ACQUIESCENCE. AS OF NOW I STILL DO NOT EXPECT THIS LATTER CONTINGENCY BUT MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHAT IT HAPPENS IN PORTUGAL AND ON THE GROUND IN TIMOR.

"IF THE PRIME MINISTER DOES DECIDE ON SOME PERSONAL MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT IN THE SITUATION AS IT IS NOW. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT HE BE GUIDED IN PART BY PARAGRAPHS 15 AND 21 OF MY [cable.] WE COME BACK I THINK TO THE FOLLOWING ESSENTIAL FACTORS:

- (A) "IT IS INDONESIA'S POLICY TO INCORPORATE TIMOR. INDONESIA HAD HOPED THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME IN AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED MANNER;*
- (B) THE PRESENT SITUATION, WHICH IS NOT REALLY INDONESIA'S FAULT, DESPITE TENDENCIES TO BLAME THEM IN SOME QUARTERS, SEEMS TO RENDER IMPROBABLE PORTUGUESE REASSERTION OF ITS AUTHORITY OR EFFECTIVE ACTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS;*
- (C) THE PRESIDENT WILL EVEN AT THIS STAGE ONLY DECIDE TO INTERVENE WITH CONSIDERABLE RELUCTANCE AND, IF HE DOES SO, WE SHOULD NOT PLACE OURSELVES IN THE VANGUARD OF INDONESIA'S CRITICS, RATHER WE SHOULD SHOW AS MUCH UNDERSTANDING AS WE CAN OF INDONESIA'S POSITION AND WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO ASSIST IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD IN THE RESTORATION OF PEACE AND ORDER, AND FINALLY;*
- (D) WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE IS NO INHERENT REASON WHY INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA WOULD, IN THE LONG RUN, BE ANY LESS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE TIMORESE INHABITANTS THAN A HIGHLY UNSTABLE INDEPENDENCE OR CONTINUAL FACTIONAL FIGHTING."*

Indonesia does not "move" in August. Early in October, the Australian Department of Defence sends up a Minute to its Minister, W. [Bill] L. Morrison, setting out its stand on East Timor. The submission summarises the standard strategic arguments in favour of getting along with Indonesia. It then takes to task a specific argument put by the Australian Ambassador in Djakarta and argues that we should persuade Indonesia to accept the "unpalatable reality of FRETILIN."

The Minute shows that the Department of Defence has taken an interest in East Timor at least as far back as December 1974. Late in February [1975], Australian newspapers reported that "top secret intelligence reports" reaching Canberra say that Indonesian forces are preparing to invade Timor ⁶⁸. Indonesian media subsequently accused leftists, Defence Department officials, and the opposition spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, of conducting a campaign against Indonesia.

X) AUSTRALIAN MEDIA WORRIES ABOUT REFUGEES

The newspapers meanwhile had the following headlines:

⁶⁸ "THE AGE" 22 FEBRUARY 1975.

[The Northern Territory News]:

- Aug. 22 "A bloodbath in Timor" "Evacuation plans" "Refugee ship sails."
- Aug. 25 "1150 evacuees and more coming; emotional wharf scenes." "Indonesia to admit refugees."
- Aug. 26 "Horror in Timor [Ken White]". "Bodies lying in streets, Dili a shambles [Terry Dahlenburg]". "Report to U.N. on Timor bloodshed." "Editorial": "Timor: we must be involved". "Evacuees weary, bemused." "Diverted to Dili." "The refugee story. Pictures [Bob Hannan]".
- Aug. 27 "Govt. forced to flee Dili"; Doctors, TV chief on way to Timor." "MacDili on the way back." "Our first refugee babe" "U.N. appeal for Timor ceasefire." "Food relief to war zone." Late News: "Consulate sanctuary."
- Aug. 28 "Peace mission leaves Darwin." "MacDili bringing 722 refugees." "Jeremias de Souza - Hero! [Ken White]" Editorial: "From bad to worse." "Involvement in Timor informal, says PM." "No reply to plea." "Warships close to Dili." "Ryan welcomes MacDili decision" "Near Timor" "U.N. urged to seek Timor settlement."
- Aug. 29 "More refugees safe: 21 injured". "Father or son, it is all the same for Timorese" "Alderman concerned about Chinese" "Medical team on stand-by" "It is like Darwin after Tracy" "Mission chief seeks talks on Timor" "Refugees on Sydney" Probe on boat to Timor" "Officers to spearhead peace talks"
- Sep. 1 "Relief plans as refugees go south." "UDT chief on way to Darwin" "MacDili sails 6 short," "Chris Santos: PM to discuss Timor peace"
- Sep. 2 "Reprieve for 5 families [Terry Dahlenburg]. " Envoy flies to Ataúro." "Medical aid for Timor." "Fighting subsides in Timor." "350 Chinese appeal for aid."
- Sep. 3 "Mystery over vessel." "Red Cross relief centre."
- Sep. 4 "Urgent talks on Timor refugees. "
- Sep. 5 "42 aboard hijacked RAAF Caribou." "Baby born on rescue ship ". " Worst malaria risk since War: Govt. orders treatment for Timor refugees."
- Sep. 8 "Indonesia has no designs: assurances on Timor". "Darby to be questioned" "Timor man detained for week." "Nursing aid for Timorese."
- Sep. 9 "Santos back from talks." "Timor stories exaggerated." Editorial: "Indonesia's suspicions." "13,000 flee Timor." "Chinese from Timor happy to stay on." "Chung Wah society criticised."
- Sep. 10 "APODETI not in control." "Red Cross flights resume." Late News "Soldiers going to Portugal."
- Sep. 11 "Newsmen in Timor."
- Sep. 12 "Indonesians seize aircraft."
- Sep. 15 "Indonesia accused [Ken White]". "It is a crazy, mixed up war; grinding Timor halt forecast." "FRETILIN chief once studied for the priesthood." "\$100,000 a month aid." Late News: "25 Timor death claims."
- Sep. 16 "Food, fuel for Ataúro." "Mission to Timor." "Indonesia says FRETILIN opposed; groups willing to meet Santos."
- Sep. 17 "FRETILIN appeals to Pope for help." "Famine danger for East Timor [Ken White]".
- Sep. 18 "Timor retaliation threat by Indonesia." "FRETILIN proposes joint peace force."
- Sep. 19 "FRETILIN tough stand on talks." "Call for Govt. aid to Timor." "Refugees: Chinese community could still help, if asked [E. W. S. CHIN]
- Sep. 22 "122 start language classes." "Jakarta sceptical on Timor talks: "Waiting for the invitation." " No Indonesian

troops in fighting.”

- Sep. 23 “Indonesian denies claim on troops; “Not involved in operations.”
- Sep. 24 “Indonesians killed, says FRETILIN.” “High TB, syphilis rate in refugees.” “Refugee trawler beached.” “Defence role is seen for Darwin.”
- Sep. 25 “Refugees medical problems ‘routine’”. “Timor Governor in Portugal.” Indonesian ‘NO’ to FRETILIN joint border control plan.” “Visas for Timorese extended.”
- Sep. 26 “Release of 26 men sought.”
- Sep. 29 “FRETILIN ready to form Govt.” “Australians accused of killings: helped UDT, says FRETILIN chief”, “Indonesia: we will not invade Timor, but FRETILIN attacks will be dealt with”; “35,000 refugees and more on the way.”
- Sep 30 “Indonesia urged to intervene in Timor”; “Timor peace bid rejected.”
- Oct. 1 “PM says FRETILIN not Communist.” Late News: “Corvette coming,” “Indonesians wipe out’ FRETILIN base”. “Concern for the welfare of Timorese”; “Backbencher criticises Govt. over Timor aid.”

[THE BULLETIN]:

- Aug. 23 “Timor: a sudden end to a happy life [Cecil Holmes]”.
- Aug. 30 “Indonesia likely to step in.”
- Sep. 6: “Timor: Island of tragedy [Gerald Stone]”. “Australia’s disgrace in Timor [Gerald Stone]”.
- Sep. 13 “Timor: Why the U.N. is unmoved by the war [Emery Barcs]”.
- Sep. 20 “The turmoil on Timor.”
- Sep. 27 “A note on Australian consuls in Timor [David McNicholl].

[NEWSWEEK, NEW YORK

- Aug. 25 “Timor: The Dili rebellion”
- Sep. 1 “Timor: Out of control”.
- Sep. 15 “Timor: A leftover battlefield?”

[NATION REVIEW, MELBOURNE]:

- Aug. 22 – 28 “Nationalism, bloodshed and misery [Jill Jolliffe]”.
- Aug. 29– Sep 4 “Timor: Labour lets them sort it out [Mungo MacCallum].
“Fighting takes on the appearance of a holy war [Jill Jolliffe].”
- Sep. 5 - 12 “The right moves on Timor Red Cross [Jill Jolliffe]”.
- Sep. 26 -Oct 2 “Gentle place, gentle people? [Jill Jolliffe]”

[TIME, New York]

Aug. 25: "PORTUGAL: The anti-communist strike back".

Sep. 1: "PORTUGAL: Turmoil at home, chaos at the colonies".

[*FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW, Hong Kong*]

Sep. 5: "Timor: an island's tragedy unfolds [Raymond Yao]".

Sep. 12: "Timor timorousness [Editorial]". "Timor: playing politics while the killing continues [Dan Coggin]". "Suharto: staying cool on the sidelines."

Sep. 19 "Timor: Indonesia's isolating tactics [Dan Coggin]".

XI) HOW THE CIVIL WAR ENDED

During this period what really happens? On August 27, after all the conciliation attempts become void, and with dozens of Portuguese Army Officers imprisoned by the rebel forces of FRETILIN and UDT, the Governor Lt. Col Lemos Pires and his team decide to evacuate Dili with a small detachment of parachutists to the island of Ataúro.

Twenty-three (23) Portuguese military people trying to evacuate other refugees at Oé-cusse and Batugadé are made prisoners. FRETILIN is better prepared for the war games and soon decimates UDT forces, thus conquering vast regions of the territory. UDT and APODETI forces are forced to withdraw to Indonesian Timor where thousands of refugees have already sought refuge.

Dr Almeida Santos as a special envoy of the Portuguese Government goes to Indonesia and Australia in order to achieve a peaceful solution for the conflict. FRETILIN accepts to negotiate and frees the Portuguese Army Officers detained by its forces. UDT refuses to negotiate. Portuguese Army Officers are detained at Kupang [capital of West Timor] and the special plane that went there with a formal authorisation from Jakarta authorities is apprehended.

By Oct. 1975, UDT and APODETI, who have joined forces in the so-called M.A.C. [Anti-Communist Movement] are by now based in West Timor [Nusa Tenggara Timor] and is supported by two minority pseudo-nationalist forces (Kota and Labour parties). There, they receive military and financial support from Indonesia, trying to retake control of East Timor from their bases in the Indonesian border.

XII) HOW THE MEDIA SAW THE IMPENDING INVASION

According to the "N. T. News" these are the headlines related to October and November:

Oct. 2 "Jakarta inquiry on battle claim."

Oct. 3 "We could seize embassy - group". "49 countries back FRETILIN at meeting." "Thorough medical check on refugees." "FRETILIN must turn military control into government [Rick Collins]. " Student pressure."

Oct. 6 "Thousand who fled fighting 'prisoners'.

- Oct. 7 "Groups invited to Timor talks." "Cattle on way to West Timor."
- Oct. 8 "Indonesia attacks! Jets, troops move into East Timor [Richard Collins]". "All quiet in Dili." "Timor flights start."
- Oct. 9 "Attacks claims denied." "FRETILIN protest to U.N."
- Oct. 10 "Situation in Timor serious." "Flights ban lifted." "A policy of harassment [Ken White]".
- Oct. 13 "Timor: Portugal seeks talks with Indonesia". "Helicopter spotting for anti-FRETILIN artillery [Rick Collins]".
- Oct. 14 "Move towards Dili."
- Oct. 15 "FRETILIN losing ground says Indonesia."
- Oct. 16 "Nuisance raids." "Portuguese Navy standing off Dili."
- Oct. 17 "Timor towns attacked, says FRETILIN; Indonesians over border!" Late News: "Australian Television crews missing."
- Oct. 20 "100 prisoners offered for lost newsmen."
- Oct. 21 "Bodies may be newsmen." "Loading ban."
- Oct. 22 "Identity check on bodies soon". "100 FRETILIN men killed - TV report."
- Oct. 24 "TV teams machine gunned - FRETILIN". "We trained refugees - Indonesia."
- Oct. 28 "FRETILIN beaten back - Indonesia."
- Oct. 30 "Not allowed on flight to Dili." "Timor aid." "Newsmen's deaths: Government inquiry".
- Oct. 31 "Govt. plea for peace in Timor: seek solution, urges minister"
- Nov. 7 "Malik seeks peace talks on Timor." "FRETILIN weeds out reactionaries." "Indonesian ships ban to continue."
- Nov. 13 "Airline harassed, claims FRETILIN." "Barge will ferry aid for Timor."
- Nov. 18 "Guarantee safety." "Call for Timor aid donations."
- Nov. 25 "No knowledge of invasion."
- Nov. 26 "FRETILIN appeal for 'halt' to aggression."
- Nov. 27 "ACTU tells Jakarta to take hands off Timor."
- Nov. 28 "Timor refugees fear reprisals [Rick Leeming]".

Other newspapers had the following articles on East Timor:

[THE AUSTRALIAN]

Nov. 27 "Shipping ban on Indonesia predicted over Timor."

[THE ADVERTISER, ADELAIDE]

- Nov. 6 "Indonesia's 'active role' in Timor war [Bruce Wilson]".
- Nov. 7 "Malik peace bid." "Dead newsmen: Questions that demand answers [Bruce Wilson]".
- Nov. 8 "Timor Relief Appeal."
- Nov. 10 "Soldiers' saw Australian newsmen shot' [Roger East]". "Indonesia's bumbling over Timor [Bruce Wilson]".

- Nov. 11 "Timorese face starvation".
 Nov. 13 "Remains of TV men received."
 Nov. 17 "FRETILIN agrees to talk on Timor in week."

[THE AGE, MELBOURNE]

- Nov. 18 "Timor talks in Australia now in doubt [Michael Richardson]". "Timor vital to defence 40 years ago."
 Nov. 22 "FRETILIN men attack our neutral stand." "Refugee's 15 hour swim to freedom."
 Nov. 24 "Canberra delays fuel for Timor [Michael Richardson]. Conference backs a free Timor."

[THE FINANCIAL REVIEW]

- Nov. 27 "Timor: A difficult balancing act [Brian Toohey]".

[THE BULLETIN]

- Nov. 1 "Timor: Tragedy casts grim shadow [Gerald Stone]".

[THE CANBERRA TIMES, CANBERRA]

- Nov. 18 "Australian help arrives."
 Nov. 20 "Dili Government working [Jill Jolliffe]".
 Nov. 21 "Famine warning."
 Nov. 24 "Timor invasion expected 'soon', 'Indonesia's making plans' [Bruce Juddery]".
 Nov. 25 "Timor town under attack [Bruce Juddery]". "FRETILIN seeks help to 'stop invasion' [Bruce Juddery]".
 Nov. 27 "Warning on danger received last week. Factions want definite date on talks"

[NATION REVIEW, MELBOURNE]

- Oct. 3 - 9 "Timor: History of the Revolution [Jill Jolliffe]" "And the history of the parties [Helen Hill]".
 Oct. 17 - 23 "Timor: fishing for Indonesian [Jill Jolliffe]".

[THE NATIONAL TIMES, SYDNEY]

- Nov. 3 - 8 "The Timorese feel that the world will not listen [Jill Jolliffe]". Overflow column: "The uncovered war."

[FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW, Hong Kong]

- Oct. 3 "Timor: Trying to keep Indonesia in check [Raymond Yao]"
- Oct. 10 "Timor: The protagonists: Back to the battlefield [Dan Coggin]"
- Oct. 17 "The great betrayal [Editorial]". "Timor: The waiting game [Dan Coggin]". "Who is who in the struggle [Dan Coggin]". "Interview: Ali Murtopo: Indonesia's 'special interest' [Dan Coggin]"
- Oct. 31 "Timor: 'Beaten' Army back on the battlefield [Dan Coggin]". "After the storm, Timor refugees [Johanna Brookes]"
- Nov. 78 "Timor: Putting a strain on relations [Kenneth Randall]"

[THE NEWS, ADELAIDE]

- Nov. 7 STOP Press: "FRETILIN rejects peace move."
- Nov. 10 "Indonesia's role still important for Australia [Dennis Warner]"

[THE SUNDAY MAIL, ADELAIDE]

- Oct. 26 "Timor: - There's some kind of civil war going on is not there? [Dennis Atkins]"

(SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, SYDNEY)

- Nov. 26 "Indonesians pound key Timor town. Rocket attack (Michael Richardson)". "Call for doctors in East Timor."

[DIRECT ACTION, GLEBE (SYDNEY)]

- Nov. 6 "Timor independence movement under attack (Steve Painter)"

XIII) AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS

We mentioned a few pages back that the Australian Department of Defence sent up a Minute to its Minister, W. L. (Bill) Morrison, setting out its stand on East Timor. Let us have a close look at its contents:

"Minute from Strategic and International Policy Division, Department of Defence, 9 October 1975

RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA SECRET AUSTEO

The attached cables to and from our Djakarta Embassy once again expose the risks for Australia's relations with Indonesia contained in the issue of Portuguese Timor's future. This submission reviews the situation from the point of view of the defence interest.

Background

"It is submitted that what is ultimately and most importantly, at stake in relations with Indonesia is the defence interest. Apart from (Papua New Guinea) PNG, Indonesia is the territory through and from which any non-nuclear attack against Australia could be most readily launched. Command of bases in Indonesia would probably be essential to any attack other than a purely maritime attack. A secure, united and well-disposed Indonesia is, therefore, a basic and enduring desideratum of our strategic policy. At the same time, Indonesia is the country most favourably placed to attack Australia. It would already be capable of low-level harassment that would create difficult defence problems. As its capabilities increase over the years, it will become capable of more substantial attack. The attack on Australia by Indonesia would not necessarily involve such major changes in the global strategic order as would critically affect US interests (compared with the major changes required for an attack by e.g. Japan). US involvement in support of Australia would, therefore, be more uncertain, particularly at levels of threat below major assault.

"These, and associated considerations are of far greater moment than other aspects of Australia's relations with Indonesia, such as trade or investment. Indeed, Australia's relations with Indonesia in other than the political and strategic areas are still comparatively slight and unlikely to develop quickly. (Communications through the archipelago are important but unlikely to be affected by other than political or strategic factors).

Assessments over the years have rated military threat from Indonesia as improbable, and this is still the assessment. The assessment rests heavily, however, on the continuation of the friendly and co-operative relations that have prevailed for most of the period since the foundation of the Republic. (And even during the sharp differences that arose over Dutch New Guinea and Sukarno's confrontation of Malaysia, there was never an open political breach. Indonesia did not then perceive or treat Australia as a prime adversary. It made no political attack on Australia - despite our vulnerability to Sukarnoist invective regarding such matters as Australian policy on immigration, the aborigines, PNG or support for the British "neo-colonialist.")

'What has concerned us in Defence is that the issue of Portuguese Timor might develop in such a way as substantially to impair friendly relations between the two countries, and to identify Australia in Indonesian eyes as an adversary, or at least an unsympathetic and unhelpful neighbour, with erosion of the mutual confidence essential to our long-term defence interest. This is still our concern. I made a submission about this to your predecessor before his visit to Djakarta last December (1974). In February (1975), when intelligence reports indicated an increased probability of Indonesian military action to seize Portuguese Timor, he wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs urging action to deflect the Indonesians from such a course. The Defence concern was also expressed in the briefing note to you for your overseas visit in August. The basic argument in these papers was that, if the Indonesians resorted to action to gain control of Portuguese Timor, the Australian domestic reaction would probably be such as to make it very difficult for the Government to sustain co-operative policies towards Indonesia.

“In particular, the program for defence aid and cooperation with Indonesia would probably come under attack from both the left and right of the domestic political spectrum; and beyond this, there could be attempts to discredit the Government’s strategic assessment and the defence policies, and posture to Indonesia, based on it.

The situation could be exploited with demands for heightened defence expenditure and greater defence readiness than the Government has argued is necessary for our present and prospective strategic circumstances. Whether such anxieties about domestic reactions are realistic or not is essentially a matter of your political judgement. However, were there to be consequent difficulties about, for example, the defence aid program to Indonesia - and we shall shortly be making a submission to you about the follow-on program - there would be a risk of unfavourable Indonesian reaction, affecting relations in general. This might blow over or it might not.

“We should have at least to reckon with the strong possibility that the Indonesian perception of Australia would be changed and that we could no longer rest such confidence on the continuation of the basically friendly Indonesian attitude of the last 30 years. This is not to say that we should then expect trouble from Indonesia in the defence field. But our relations would be less easy and secure: the contingency of an unfriendly Indonesia ready in some future circumstance to exert politico - military pressure against Australia would gain credibility.

The policy dilemma

“If I may submit our concern to you frankly, Australian policy now appears to offer little prospect that an outcome of the Portuguese Timor issue injurious to the defence interest can be avoided. This seems likely to be the case whether or not the Indonesians used force and stimulated the Australian reaction that has concerned us and whether or not the Government was able to ride out such a reaction.

“I suggest that we have just as much ground for concern about the Indonesian perception of Australia that is being shaped in the Portuguese Timor situation as for concern about our own public attitudes and their effect on our ability to pursue co-operative policies. 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 one hand we have sought to deny them with the other. The attached Foreign Affairs cable to Djakarta continues to look forward to “talks” between the Timorese, Indonesia, and Portugal. But even if there were talks, there is little reason to expect that they would lead the Timorese to accept integration. Whether we view FRETILIN as a nationalist group or merely as the group with the guns - and there is no firm assessment on this point - it would be prudent to base policy on the balance of probability that FRETILIN

and associated elements will retain political dominance.

“To achieve integration, Indonesia would have to dispose of FRETILIN. There appears no prospect at all that this could be achieved by political negotiation it would require force on a scale that could not be hidden from the Australian public eye. Even were FRETILIN to crack and weaken, we would have to expect that a significant residue of opponents of Indonesia would take to the hills in guerrilla operations.

“Woolcott refers to other political groupings; but the status and attitude of FRETILIN appear basic realities to which Indonesian policy, and our own, must adjust. Woolcott argues in his cable that Australian domestic pressures can be contained, and should be contained in the interests of preserving “our long-term national interest.” It is precisely the practicability of this course that we have queried in Defence and would query the more today. I would submit that by continuing to urge the Indonesians to abstain from force and by advocating talks that appear to have no realistic prospect of satisfying Indonesian objectives, we increasingly risk eroding our political relationship with the Indonesians. The Indonesians are likely to see our role over the months as essentially negative and lacking any constructive content. We could be seen by at least some influential Indonesians as a “partly principal” in their frustration.

“You will be aware of the various indications over recent months of Indonesian impatience and doubt about the Australian position, and their view that we have allowed ourselves to get into a position of support to the Portuguese and FRETILIN. The prospect of a significant impairment of our relations appears increasingly probable whatever the outcome. Indonesian irritation at a political stalemate would rub off onto Australia as we continue to seek to restrain them from the use of force and advocated talks, thus aiding, they could feel, consolidation by FRETILIN. Were the Indonesians nevertheless to use force, they would be in the position of seeking their objective in the face of sustained Australian opposition and strong public condemnation - continuing for some time if resistance to the Indonesians were stubborn.

“If the issue were to go to the U.N., FRETILIN’s position would be much strengthened and the prospect of Indonesia gaining its objective the more remote. Could Australia escape some responsibility in Indonesian eyes for bringing this about? And how would reference to the U.N. solve our dilemma? In all respects, the prospect appears to be one of continuing instability in the neighbourhood and a souring of our relations with Indonesia. The hope that the Indonesians will be able quickly and efficiently to bring about a settlement without significant political repercussions appears increasingly misplaced.

Conclusion

“Because of the essential dilemmas of the situation and the likely prospect of difficulty with Indonesia if Australian policy was not realistically based, we advocated in Defence very early on a line of policy that appeared to offer reasonable prospects of meeting the basic requirements of all parties, namely acceptance of an independent State

in Portuguese Timor. The disadvantages are obvious. An independent State would be poor and weak. Its existence could perpetuate instability in Indonesia. Indonesia would be frustrated. Australian advocacy of this solution would risk Indonesian suspicion that an independent State had been Australia's objective all along.

"On the other hand, such a course would remove the Indonesian threat of force with its injurious consequences for relations with Australia. It would satisfy the demand for self-determination. It would move the Indonesians from a policy of confrontation, which risks pushing their Timorese opponents into the extremism Indonesia fears, to one of cooperation with the dominant political elements in the territory and so allow them good prospects of negotiating some arrangements that could satisfy their security requirements. Australia could strongly support this.

"Ultimately, if the Indonesians were skilful in their political policy, this course would offer them after the passage of some years good prospects of peaceful absorption of the territory or at least unchallengeable dominance there. In the meantime, the territory would be heavily dependent upon the goodwill and support of Indonesia and Australia and the two together should be able to provide against any inimical external influence becoming established. An additional advantage would be the injection into the Australian Indonesian relationship of a substantial field of cooperation. This would be of major benefit to the defence interest. If Australia is to continue to advocate talks as the alternative to Indonesian use of force, it appears highly desirable that we put forward some constructive suggestion.

"If Indonesia could be persuaded to accept the unpalatable reality of FRETILIN and the major switch of policy involved in the acceptance of an independent State, there could be the prospect of fruitful talks, with Indonesia in a strong position to establish major influence in the territory. Were the Government to find merit in this proposal, it would clearly be difficult to persuade the Indonesians to adopt it. But with a major effort of statesmanship and careful preparation - it would not be impossible. It appears preferable to the likely alternatives now facing us. In the present circumstances of political stalemate and a possible reference to the U.N., the time could be propitious for discussions with the Indonesians. If you feel that this line of policy is unacceptable, the question remains of how to protect the defence interest, from the apparent risks of a deterioration in political relations with Indonesia.

"I submit that a policy of simply seeking to ride out the expected difficulties would not be adequate. However, all I can suggest alternatively is that the best be done from now on to separate the defence interest and policy from our political policy, e.g., by public emphasis on the major importance of the defence relationship with Indonesia, by pointing out the common strategic interest with Indonesia in a settlement that reduced the possibility of external infiltration into the area, by expressing understanding of Indonesia's concern on this score and by getting on with the follow-on defence aid program, perhaps for conclusion on a personal visit by you to Djakarta on the next few weeks.

"Such a line would no doubt draw some domestic criticism and could be read in Indonesia as a condemnation of the use of force. It would probably not enable you to maintain the defence relationship unimpaired in the event of public

outcry at any immoderate Indonesian action. It would, however, attest to the Indonesians the importance you attach to the defence relationship, it would help to preserve this from erosion by political developments and could prepare the way for an earlier resumption of the relationship should this have to be suspended. I agree that this proposal is third best, to the second best of persuading the Indonesians to accept the reality of FRETILIN and an independent State in which they could work for dominance.

“However, the best solution, integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia on politically acceptable terms is not a realistic prospect and the present alternatives, including reference to the U.N., all offer injury to the defence interest. DJIO concurs in the assessment of FRETILIN’s status and the improbability of Indonesia being able to dispose of its Timorese opponents without significant use of arms. Submitted for your consideration. You may wish to discuss the matter with some of your departmental advisers.

(W. B. PRITCHETT) First Assistant Secretary”

XIV) INDONESIA LURES THE PORTUGUESE

This very realistic approach to the question of East Timor is not totally heeded by the Minister, and the signal sent to both FRETILIN and Indonesian is somehow contradictory. Meanwhile, in Rome, during the first week of November, the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia, Major Melo Antunes and Adam Malik meet and sign a common platform agreement, in which Portugal is recognised as the administering power over Timor and where both parties agree to try to establish a ceasefire agreement as well as negotiations between Portugal and the three main political movements (FRETILIN, UDT, and APODETI.)

Malik promises to use his influence to draw UDT and APODETI to the negotiating table. UDT is already affirming its commitment to integration, in a not so subtle political move. Darwin, in the Northern Territory, is the chosen place for the negotiations and a probable date is set for November 24. FRETILIN replies and accepts. UDT and APODETI never reply to the Portuguese offer for negotiations. It is hard, then, for the Jakarta Government to maintain some political duality. The International Press Agencies compound the imbroglio by reporting the unfounded news. The International Red Cross barely sends any reports from Dili, in a desperate attempt to maintain its precarious presence there.

Few international correspondents of war are still in Timor (they are evacuated until the 7 December, after five Australian are savagely murdered by (pro-) Indonesian forces in mid-October). The Portuguese delegation to the negotiations is headed by Navy Commander Vítor Crespo intended to agree on a ceasefire, to establish a transitional transfer of powers to the Timorese and to solve the problem of repatriating tens of thousands of refugees. FRETILIN frustrated by the failure of the tripartite negotiations indicates its willingness to proceed with a unilateral declaration of independence to replace the vacuum of the Portuguese administration in Ataúro. On November 17, M.A.C. (Anti-Communist movement, comprised by UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Labour Parties), proposes a new Summit in Bali. Melo Antunes in his Rome meeting with Malik had previously dismissed such a proposal.

XV) BRIEF INDEPENDENCE

November 28 sees the proclamation of independence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. The Indonesian press agencies report a proclamation of integration by M.A.C. The Portuguese official position on the subject comes to public knowledge on November 29. Portugal does not recognise neither the unilateral independence proclaimed by FRETILIN, nor the integration proclaimed by M.A.C. and threatens to have the case resolved at the United Nations General Assembly if no peaceful solution for the problem is found.

Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau are the first countries to recognise formally the new republic. On 2 December, Adam Malik visits West Timor, and at Atambua exhorts the Timorese people there (Atambua was the M.A.C. Headquarters in the border of Indonesia) to resort to armed fight as the ONLY way to solve the Timorese conflict. Thus, Malik reneged on the Rome agreement with the Portuguese. It is curious to remark that the proclamation of independence by FRETILIN is severely castigated by the Indonesians, but they do not bother to accept the simultaneous proclamation of integration by the M.A.C. forces. Malik stresses how preoccupied Indonesia is with the situation in East Timor, that he has already conveyed Indonesian fears to eight countries, namely to Washington and Moscow. Lisbon accuses in a formal diplomatic Note the Indonesian Republic of Indonesia mistakenly having reported that Portugal has recognised FRETILIN proclamation.

In its address to the world, with the unilateral proclamation of independence FRETILIN alerts the international public opinion to the imminent threat of Indonesian invasion to the new republic, after the bloody fighting that led to the military victory of FRETILIN forces. Remembering the headlines of the "N. T. News" of the date, we do not see any mention of a unilateral declaration of independence by FRETILIN. The Australian media is desperately trying to avoid the impossible:

Nov. 25 "No knowledge of invasion."

Nov. 26 "FRETILIN appeals for halt to aggression."

Nov. 27 "ACTU tells Jakarta to take hands off Timor."

Nov. 28 "Timor refugee fears reprisals (Rick Leeming)".

Dec. 1 "Move for aid fails."

Dec. 2 "Timor solution in battlefield."

Dec. 3 "Evacuation from Timor." "Recognition for FRETILIN."

Dec. 4 "Doctor tells of death threat; Timor evacuees arrive," "FRETILIN to hold talks", "Support for Resolution", "Call for peace force in Timor." Late News: "Service for newsmen."

Dec. 5 "Timor seeks to join U.N..."

XVI) THE BRUTAL INVASION FINALLY HAPPENS

On the 6th December after a violent offensive of pro-Indonesian military forces at the border village of Maliana and its important adjacent plateau, the officials of the new Democratic Republic of East Timor start a series of visits to various

countries in order to get support for their newly proclaimed independence, as well as to the United Nations where they seek to get admission. The Portuguese Presidency of the Republic issues on the 7th December a lengthy communiqué where it is stated that the Ataúro Island is still under Portuguese administration as well as the enclave of Oé-cusse Ambeno [West Timor]. According to the same source, the border region of Maliana except for Bobonaro is under M.A.C. forces, with the rest of the territory under FRETILIN forces.

The threat of hunger and famine is very real, as real is the lack of medical supplies and of fuel products. It is somehow with a certain degree of surprise that the international news agencies report that Dili is invaded and captured by Indonesian forces on that same day [7 December]. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Adam Malik, refers to the military operation as being the fruit of voluntary forces, recruited by UDT, APODETI, KOTA, and Labour political parties.

From Australia, a spokesperson for FRETILIN accuses President Ford and Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger of supporting the invasion, and blames it on Australian inaction. It has to be considered as more than a mere coincidence that on the eve of the fatal day, both Ford and Kissinger have a series of meetings on the Indonesian capital, Jakarta.

In Australia, the recently demoted Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam accuses the interim government of supporting the anti-communist and anti-FRETILIN hostility by Indonesia.

Malcolm Fraser, the conservative leader makes public a note, in which the Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock stresses that the Australian Government is still considering Portugal the administering power over Timor, and declines to recognise any representativeness of the Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor [FRETILIN].

The Indonesian Ambassador to Portugal meanwhile informs the Lisbon Government of the humanitarian grounds for the disembarking and conquest of Dili, upon request of local authorities. Surprisingly, considering that Portugal has previously been very slow in reacting to events in Timor, the Lisbon Government through its Cabinet Council decides to immediately break diplomatic relations with Indonesia, and to lodge an official protest with the United Nations, to impose an end to the Indonesian military intervention, and to work for the immediate freedom of 23 Army Officers under UDT forces' detention, since the coup in August.

XVII) EAST TIMOR, THE MEDIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE: AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS MURDERED TO SILENCE THE WORLD OUTCRY

To avoid letting the world know about their crimes the Indonesians did not hesitate to murder five Australian journalists. Back in October 1975, two Australian television teams were filming the fall of Balibó, Portuguese East Timor, to Indonesian troops supported by Timorese refugees. Those images would wipe any doubts on the participation of the Indonesian regular army on the attack and would deny Indonesia's propaganda that only Timorese refugees grouped under M.A.C. [Anti-Communist Movement] and Indonesian volunteers were trying to regain control of Timor.

At Maliana, few kilometres before Balibó a Portuguese television crew from RTP, led by journalist Adelino Gomes witnesses the attack where heavy artillery, firebombs and automatic machine guns were used, trying to film the landing of a helicopter moments after the combat. The day before, Adelino Gomes (RTP) had talked to his Australian counterparts, from Melbourne's Channel 7 and Sydney's Channel 9. On the yellow walls of the house where they were staying the word, Australia and the Australian flag was prominent. One of them, Greg Shackleton had told him:

"This is for the Indonesians to notice if they come to Balibó they will know that there are some foreigners and they will not kill us. It is our embassy."

Less than 24 hours later, by the dawn of 16 October 1975, the Indonesians start attacking Balibó with the support from some Timorese members of M.A.C. Both Indonesian and Australian authorities knew the journalists were there. Just a few days before, some TV programs had broadcast their messages on the way to Balibó because it was an area predicted to be attacked by the Indonesians, trying to oust it from FRETILIN's control.

One of the journalists managed before being killed to say that he was Australian, but Indonesia's objective was the same: to eliminate the inconvenient witnesses, so all five TV crew members were consciously and coldly murdered. Apart from journalist Greg Shackleton, the others were Tony Stewart [sound engineer], Jan Cunningham and Brian Peters [cameramen] and another journalist, Malcolm Peters. The Indonesian generals responsible for this operation [Col. Dading Kalbuardi and Major Yunus Yusuf] were promoted soon after that. General Suharto quickly decorated the official photographer of this operation.

Although the Australian government was embarrassed with the event's impact on public opinion, it conducted a quick and inconclusive public inquiry, but was forced on October 21, 1998 to reopen, due to an ABC TV program, where Olandino Rodrigues, an East Timorese member of the Indonesian advancing troops certified that the journalists were killed by Indonesian soldiers after FRETILIN had left Balibó. Thus vanished the theory they were victims of crossfire.

At that time there were in East Timor, other Australian journalists, including Roger East, got statements that leave no doubts on the intervention of the Indonesian Armed Forces in this crime.

Indonesia was unable to gain any substantial territorial control after their border skirmishes and about a month and a half later, by early December, an invasion is imminent, thus forcing the Australian authorities to advise all Australian citizens to abandon the territory.

Most foreigners and journalists heeded the advice, but Roger East decided to stay even after the International Red Cross decided to evacuate to Ataúro Island. On December, 7, roughly one hour after the invasion Roger East was still able to send via the Telecommunications Centre of Radio Marconi, in Dili, a message to Australian Associated Press [AAP] and Reuters in Australia. Shortly thereafter, he was taken to the Dili Harbour area where he was murdered, as were hundreds of Timorese.

The collusion between the Australian government and the Indonesians was such that not even a protest was raised on the murder of this Australian journalist and Australian citizen. For more than 13 years [December 1975 - December 1988] the Indonesians impose an almost total news blackout to East Timor. Very few foreign journalists are allowed into East Timor. Whenever authorised their visits are closely monitored and their freedom of movements is minimal. Independent journalists' report on the generalised fear in a decimated population, traumatised by war and famine and all other atrocities committed by the occupying forces. The only exception to this rule comes from compromised journalists who decided beforehand to make favourable reports to the Indonesian occupiers. Even on such cases, all they are allowed to see are towns, new hospitals and schools, new roads and other façade improvements that the Indonesian try to show as if to forget the genocide of the East Timorese people. Contacts with the population and the bush are very limited or impossible to make.

The International Red Cross was allowed to visit temporarily the territory on March 24, 1979, under harsh restrictions and limitations. For more than three years, their presence was forbidden. In one of its first reports, back in 1979, the Red Cross states that the humanitarian situation in East Timor is worse than Biafra during the avoid the death of tens of thousands of people.

When East Timor was "opened" in January 1989, as widely announced by the Indonesians, many independent journalists and humanitarian organisations were still denied a visa into the territory. Some other journalists, admit how well received their requests were, of being invited for dinner by diplomatic members who were willing to give them all their support, if their reports would be seen as favourable to Indonesia, but who were later refused their visas when they did not intend to play the Indonesian game.

XVIII) THE PORTUGUESE LEAVE EAST TIMOR TERRITORY AND THE INDONESIAN INSTALL A PUPPET GOVERNMENT

The Portuguese Government announces the immediate withdrawal of the military garrison stationed at the Ataúro Island. On December 8, Adam Malik announces the formation of a Provisional Government in Dili, adding that although it is a very load burden for Indonesia his country could not avoid responding to the danger and threat for its security and the stability of the Indonesian Republic.

A White House spokesman denies that either the President [Gerald Ford] or the Secretary of State [Henry Kissinger] have at any moment during their stay in Jakarta been informed about the imminent invasion, by the Indonesian President.

The Popular Republic of China who has already recognised the Democratic Republic of East Timor, castigates vehemently the Indonesian invasion, considering it a mere disguise for the annexation of the territory, thus depriving it of ever achieving independence. Jakarta retaliates against Portugal with the demand for the immediate closure of the Embassy in Jakarta, and the immediate suspension of all consular and diplomatic relations between the two countries, as well as

the repatriation of all Portuguese consular staff. By December, 12, Baucau, pro-Indonesian forces capture the second city of Timor. The General Assembly on that date approves a first Resolution (72 votes against 10 and 43 abstentions) in which "it deplores the Indonesian military intervention and demands an immediate withdrawal." Jakarta announces on December 14 the annexation of the Portuguese enclave of Oé-cusse Ambeno.

In Lisbon, 18 December, a leader of M.A.C. interviewed by the weekly "TEMPO" confirms the presence of Chinese (from Taiwan), Malay, Filipinos and Indonesians in the Armed Forces of that Anti-communist Movement, and accuses FRETILIN of having mercenaries from Mozambique and Vietnam. December 20 at the United Nations, Mário Viegas Carrascalão [founder of UDT, and ex-Vice-President of ANP in Timor] accuses Lisbon of favouring FRETILIN and proposes the integration of Timor in Indonesia.

XIX) U.N. CONDEMNATION

Two weeks after the initial tabling of the problem by Portugal, the U.N., and its Security Council finally, approve the 2nd Resolution on East Timor. Within the Security Council, there are two divergent currents of opinion: one lead by the Non-Aligned Movement harshly criticises Lisbon by its ineptitude on decolonising East Timor, and Indonesia by its armed intervention. The other current composed by the European Economic Community and Sweden actively tries to exempt Lisbon from the outcome of Timor disaster. The final wording of the Resolution tries to reconcile the two theses: *"deploring the Indonesian armed intervention and regretting that Portugal has not fulfilled its total responsibility as administering coloniser."*

Thus, the invasion changes from *"condemned"* to *"deplored"* and the action by the Lisbon Government goes from *"deplored"* to *"regretted."* Apart from this verbal diplomatic florid sinuosity, it *"is requested"* instead of *"demanded"* of all countries *"to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor"* as well as *"its undeniable right to self-determination."* It is also *"requested the withdrawal of Indonesian Forces"* and *"the cooperation of the administering power [Portugal] with the U.N. to help the population to exercise its right to self-determination."* Last but not the least, it is also approved to *"send a special emissary of the Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, to study in loco the situation and try to establish contact with the different movements."*

This slow evolution of the situation on the diplomatic front, conjugated with the rise of the conservative forces to power in Australia and New Zealand, and the recent reaffirmation of the alliance of the North-American imperialism in South-East Asia and in the Pacific, serves only the interests of the invader and does not leave any valid alternative to a peaceful solution of the problem. In general terms, we can easily compare the lack of international support for the fighting in East Timor, with the annexation of the kingdom of Sikkim by India.

All news agencies try to supply the most contradictory news about Timor, and the blackest year in the History of Timor nears its end. On the mountains outside Dili, FRETILIN forces fight fiercely the Indonesian invader and the M.A.C. forces, in what will become a protracted guerrilla war. By December 28, the puppet pro-Indonesian Government, headed by

Arnaldo Reis Araújo [APODETI's leader]⁶⁹ asks Kurt Waldheim to postpone the U.N. delegation visit until further notice. The U.N. does not pay any attention to this request. On the same day, it is announced that Ataúro has succumbed to the invader.

FRETILIN meanwhile continues with its diplomatic offensive: Rogério Lobato [ex-2nd Lieutenant of the Portuguese Colonial Army in Timor] is received in audience by the Peking leaders as Minister for Defence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

In Lisbon, FRETILIN leaders meet with Portuguese revolutionary political parties in search of support [MRPP and FEC (ml)].

At the United Nations, José Ramos Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Information of the Democratic Republic of East Timor denounces the second invasion of Indonesian troops on Christmas day with more than 25,000 men, claiming his movement still controls 2/3 of the territory. Jakarta alerts the U.N. delegation that the situation even in Dili is not yet under total control and mentions the dangers if such delegation is to attempt a visit.

At the U.N., the Indonesian representative officially requests its postponement. Alarico Fernandes, Secretary-General of FRETILIN, uses radio broadcasts from Timor to ask for humanitarian help from Australia to evacuate refugees and declares that the second invasion wave is being halted with a massive concentration of FRETILIN forces laying siege to Ailéu [40 km south of Dili, and provisional headquarters of the Indonesian Army].

By January 10, however, the situation has definitely changed and Adam Malik is able to perform a publicity stunt by visiting Dili, and show the world that, actually, Timor is already Indonesian. During such visit, it is not possible to determine the composition of the Cabinet of the self-proclaimed Provisional Government or even the regions of Timor totally controlled by the "voluntaries."

In Lisbon, on January, 17 the Minister for Cooperation alerts the public opinion for the manipulation and speculation created by the contradictory reports from Indonesia and from Timorese radio broadcasts. FRETILIN has, by now, been recognised by at least seven countries and obtains the strong backing of the P. R. of China, Vietnam, Korea and Cambodia, on its fight against the imperialist invaders.

XX) U.N. DELEGATION TO TIMOR

Mr Gucciardi, after a four-day visit to Timor, as an emissary of Kurt Waldheim declares he is only able to visit the areas controlled by the M.A.C. forces. Simultaneously the self-proclaimed Dili government states that "*the fusion with Indonesia, announced by the coalition, solves forever the decolonisation problem for Portugal, being already a 'fait accompli' if not (yet) 'de jure'.*"

⁶⁹ A Timorese traitor and collaborationist with the Japanese invaders during World War II.

From Darwin comes the news that Australian officials apprehend the transmitter establishing communication with East Timor. Cristóvão Santos, the FRETILIN spokesperson accuses the Australian Government of denying Gucciardi, the chance to visit the 60 percent of Timor still controlled by FRETILIN. Santos also accuses the Fraser Government of refusing to provide transport for Gucciardi to land at Same [South Coast], where the aerodrome is still under FRETILIN control.

The recently dismissed Labour Party, then in opposition, also vents its frustration against the Conservative boycott. Portugal offers one of its two Navy corvettes to transport Gucciardi to the FRETILIN-controlled areas. Notwithstanding the sophistication of the military equipment used by the Indonesian and pro-Indonesian forces, the invading forces (voluntary, conscripted or not) have to face a stern opposition by the guerrilla forces. Lt. Col. Angelo de Magalhães, Military Commander, and the last Acting Governor personally observe its sophistication, before he abandoned the Ataúro Island. This evidently shows when, after more than a month, such force control only one-third of the territory.

The U.N. mission to East Timor is definitely not favoured by the ASEAN block, which very much dislikes the FRETILIN forces and what they stand for. The hegemony of ASEAN, plus Australia and New Zealand is, meanwhile, being contested by the autonomists of Papua New Guinea, West New Guinea (Irian Jaya), Moluccas, Philippines, Borneo, China, Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. These countries oppose very much the ASEAN tendency to side with the US and all imperialistic western forces. An immense chessboard of different and diverging interests and policies, being shared by the fate of more than 600,000 Timorese, who only want some peace and self-determination. In exchange, they are offered the war, the misery, the hunger, and probably even the extermination. On which crime? Why them, victims of expressing themselves as their representatives?

The fate of 23 [Portuguese] Army Officers is unknown until later in the year [1975]. Are they still alive? What about the thousands already killed? Is this another genocide? Let us remember what happened in 1965, with the Communist plot, when more than a million people are relentlessly massacred, just because they are, or are suspected of being, or because they might be communists. That is when the democratic dictatorship of Mr Suharto succeeds with the plentiful support of the United States.

This is the tragic vision of a land that has the misfortune of being colonised and decolonised by Portugal. "To decolonise is not to abandon" these are the words proffered by Dr Almeida Santos and by Lt. Col. Lemos Pires. They end up abandoning, cowardly, impotently, what they promise to keep. Can we consider this another original way to decolonisation, Portuguese style?

XXI) 200,000 DEAD, NOT EVEN THE CATTLE SURVIVED

According to statistics of the "Provincial Government of Timor" quoted in a report from an Australian Senate Commission the number of cattle heads in East Timor was drastically cut between 1973 [two years before the invasion] and 1979 [four years after the Indonesian occupation]:

CATTLE HEADS	1973	1979	PERCENTILE
BUFFALOES	141,000	24,000	83%
HORSES	139,000	15,000	89%
SWINE	305,000	27,000	91%
SHEEP/OVINE	318,000	36,000	88%

Statistics relating to agriculture are harder to establish but according to the letter sent to General Suharto by those two members of the "Timor Provincial Regional Assembly," the sandal culture was totally destroyed. What survived the bombings did not survive the cupidity of the occupiers. This burnt land policy meant a systematic destruction of East Timor and its life performed by the Indonesian occupiers.

All this was done, of course with American and other western nations' arms. This was happening while the Indonesian puppets in the United Nations stated that the situation was normal or almost normal. Let us recall what the representative of the "Provisional Government of East Timor" said to the Security Council in April 1976: "*Life returned to normal in East Timor, apart from some small disturbances by FRETILIN gangs in isolated areas.*"

How can the Indonesians justify the death of a quarter of the population and of about 90 percent of all cattle during the first four years of occupation? The massacres became more local and selective after 1980, as the missionary refers in his September / October 1981 report. In March 1983 there were some peace negotiations and a short-lived truce operated between March and August of that year, the massacres, torture, assassinations, arbitrary detentions and disappearances soon become normal again.

XXII) HOW THE MEDIA SAW THE INVASION

Let us follow the headlines from the invasion date:

[*"NT News"*]

- Dec. 9 "FRETILIN leader to be killed. 500 dead says FRETILIN leader. PNG next warning." "Shame Mr Whitlam [Stella Kirk's letter]."
- Dec. 10 "Execution ordered for FRETILIN. ALP turned back on Timor. Doctor showers blood in protest. Aid cut wanted. U.N. to vote on Timor. Australia wants say in U.N. Timor talks. 'Plot' says Peking. Ban on parts for Indonesian jets."
- Dec. 11 "U.N. vote on Timor postponed." "PNG pleased to see stability"
- Dec. 12 "U.N. decision closer." "Women, children slaughtered [Ken White]." "Volunteers must decide when to leave Timor, says Malik."
- Dec. 15 "Dili bombarded, sacked: FRETILIN."
- Dec. 16 "Dili destroyed by cannon fire - FRETILIN." "Timor: U.N. debate tomorrow."

"British Labour MP's protest."

Dec. 17 "Plea to give aid ignored - Red Cross." "Indonesia, Portugal in clash."

[*NATION REVIEW, Melbourne*]

Dec. 12 - 18 "Timor: Blood is on Australia's hands [José Ramos Horta interviewed by Bill Green]. Keeping FRETILIN quiet [Robert Cameron]."

[*N. T. News*]

Dec. 19 "East missing in Timor." "Pro-Indonesian parties form Timor government."

Dec. 22 "Peacock visit to Jakarta."

Dec. 23 "U.N. call: get out of Timor." "Indonesians accused of atrocities [Ken White]."

Dec. 24 "More talks before U.N. sends man to Timor." "Happy Christmas 1975, Rich, Fat, Selfish Australians, Aggressor Indonesians [Advertisement, R. N. Wesley-Smith]."

Dec. 30 "Jakarta 'integrates' Ataúro. Get out, says China. Peace mission."

Dec. 31 "Evacuation plan off: FRETILIN retreat [Ken White]. Move to join U.N. mission. Bishops ask PM to act."

1976

Jan. 1 "Indonesian consul office defaced"

Jan. 2 "Timor a prairie of fire: FRETILIN."

Jan. 5 "Journalist shot, says FRETILIN."

Jan. 6 "U.N. man in Timor this week."

Jan. 7 "Gunpoint welcome for Malik [Ken White]. Strong-arm politics reap a rich reward for Jakarta [Ken White]. Indonesians still want Communists as friends."

Jan. 8 "FRETILIN: 75 Indonesians die in fight."

Jan. 9 "Envoy off to Jakarta."

Jan 12 "Portugal offers troops to go into Timor."

Jan. 13 "Wreaths for Timor dead. Ambon this year's race finish [The yearly Regatta Darwin - Dili is changed to Darwin - Ambon]."

Jan. 14 "No free vote for Timorese. Jakarta warlords' delusion over Timor [Ken White]."

Jan. 15 "Protest on Timor likely. Malik lashes out at criticism of policy. FRETILIN says three towns were retaken."

Jan 16 "Envoy going to Dili despite warnings [Ken White]."

Jan 19 "PM rejects advice on Timor [Ken White]"

Jan 20 "Darwin CIET wants ambassador sacked"

Jan 21 "Doctors in bid to run blockade"

Jan 22 "Peacock: no to Aust. aid team"

Jan 23 "Timor tied to Jakarta, envoy told."

Jan 26 "Police close down Timor radio [Ken White]"

- Jan. 27 "Radio seizure hampers peace bid. MACDILI aground off Vietnam. Malik's visit in order—Jakarta."
- Jan. 28 "Attack may stop U.N.'s Timor visit"
- Jan 29 "Eyewitnesses say males slaughtered [Ken White]" "PNG takeover?"
- Jan. 30 "Corvettes ready for envoy. Govt. knew of plan to seize radio."
- Feb. 2 "U.N. envoy arrives in Darwin"
- Feb. 3 "Jakarta jams radio calls"
- Feb. 4 "Threat will not stop envoy's Timor mission"
- Feb. 5 "FRETILIN given radio. War criminal now leads provisional Timor Govt. [Ken White]".
- Feb. 6 "U.N. mission off? Airstrips face attack - FRETILIN [Ken White]".
- Feb. 9 "Waldheim in favour of peace force. Talks with Peacock."
- Feb. 10 "Peace bid not ended - U.N. chief. Timorese refugees can stay - Govt."
- Feb. 11 "Govt. stops FRETILIN link" Timor war may create another Vietnam – Horta."
- Feb. 12 "Girls raped, shot - FRETILIN"
- Feb. 16 "Children killed - says FRETILIN."
- Feb. 17 "Action demand over deaths of newsmen"
- Feb. 19 "FRETILIN pulls out of Darwin"
- Feb. 20 "Portugal 'armed FRETILIN troops'
- Feb. 26 "Assembly member slams Aust. Timor diplomacy [Ken White]".
- Feb. 27 "Jakarta replaces Timor money [Ken White]"
- Mar 11 "Security body to meet on Timor"
- Mar 16 "FRETILIN killed 30 foreigners, claims planter"
- Mar. 24 "Defence role wanted for Darwin. The truth about Balibó killings [Ken White]."
- Mar. 29 "Indonesia condemned"
- Apr. 1 "FRETILIN says 6 burned"
- Apr. 5 "Bank freezes FRETILIN account"
- Apr. 7 "Pires relieved of Timor post. Jet aircraft over Timor."
- Apr. 12 "Araújo wants integration"
- Apr. 13 "Jakarta seizes crops" "Peacock arrives in Jakarta for talks."
- Apr. 15 "Timor: U.N. may call for Indonesian withdrawal; Resolution on East Timor. Peacock promises more aid to Indonesia."
- Apr. 20 "Red Cross gets ready to fly aid into East Timor"
- Apr. 21 "Hawke demand for new probe on journalists. No support for FRETILIN – Malaysia."
- Apr. 22 "Timor Resolution put before U.N. "Official refusal on radio link."
- Apr. 23 "U.N. Council call for Indonesian withdrawal; Resolution on East Timor. Hawke wants U.N. probe on deaths."
- Apr. 26 "Jakarta working on details, of probe" "But thousands are dying - Senator"
- Apr. 27 "Urgent probe likely on Timor deaths."
- Apr. 28 "Team to probe Timor deaths."

- Apr. 30 "Evidence of 'nod' to Jakarta - MP. Open mind on probe - Peacock."
- May 3 "No approval for Timor invasion - Whitlam. APODETI Secretary-general killed, died in FRETILIN attack on Same."
- May 4 "Timor group plans inspection by U.N."
- May 5 "FRETILIN strength down, claims provisional Govt.; Portuguese troops still in captivity."
- May 10 "Govt. failed over Timor reports claims."
- May 13 "East may still be alive - Horta"
- June 11 "Timor Assembly: farce - China"

XXIII) A SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Basically, we can condense what happened in Timor. During the decolonisation process, two of the local parties take to arms to impose their will, and start a civil war, using Portuguese armoury. The Portuguese military command witnesses all this with the utmost passivity (and unbelievable naiveté), until it decides to withdraw with the Portuguese military garrison to the Ataúro Island. Soon after, the Indonesians proceed with a calculated invasion, which is only possible, after the Portuguese authorities have abandoned the colony's capital, Dili. It has been shown in this book, that implicitly the Portuguese, would like very much to cease having responsibilities over such a distant and non-rewarding (politically and economically) colony. Remember the words of the transatlantic steamer, pronounced by Dr Almeida Santos back in October 1975.

Forgotten in such a tragic process, is the fact that the Timorese are the very only Portuguese who fought and died for Motherland during World War II. Forgotten is also the very intolerant position of the Jakarta regime to communism [remember the demise of President Sukarno and its circumstances]. Forgotten also, the remarks about the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the territory, as illustrated throughout this book. No equipment, total lack of structures, no feasible prospects of being economically independent, yet, the Portuguese decoloniser takes a similar path to the one being disastrously followed in the wealthy colonies of Africa: creating incentives to quick independence, without considering the absolute lack of local technical, political (and other) cadres.

One crucial point of which no explanation can possibly ever be provided (even now) is why the Governor, Lt. Col. Lemos Pires decides to abandon its gubernatorial headquarters, immediately after the UDT upheaval. Such attitude happens for the very first time in the entire history of Timor: not even during the Japanese invasion, has the Governor left his palatial headquarters. The quick extension of a limited armed conflict in the capital can 'only' be explained by the total passivity of the military forces. The local parties have no known external support [contrary to what happened in Angola and Mozambique], they are fighting in Portuguese territory, so why no intervention is ever considered? Can it be the anticipated result of the rushed 'Timorisation' of the local Armed Forces? How come that after the UDT upheaval and controlling most of the capital, Dili, FRETILIN without any external support musters enough arms and ammunition that are supposed to be under Portuguese control?

Why is Lt. Col. Maggiolo Gouveia left behind to be tortured and killed, if the Portuguese Army is still in Timor? Is it because he has adhered to UDT, and has to be punished accordingly? Either he is a deserter (and in that case, he should be captured and court-martialled) or, he is under detention by FRETILIN forces. In either case, not a single attempt is made to release him from captivity. The exodus of the Portuguese administration to Ataúro can be compared with a similar reaction if the Australian Government faced with difficult internal problems decides to govern from Cocos Islands. This in itself serves only to provide Indonesian with a wonderful chance of explaining its invasion. About the lack of freedom fighters or liberation movements in Timor, prior to 1974, one can be drawn into endless conjectures. If we can focus again on the situation in Lisbon while the decolonisation of Timor progressed, we will notice:

- i) Lack of interest and of knowledge of the Portuguese population in relation to Timor. This also applies to the main Portuguese political parties.*
- ii) The sense of priority given to the decolonisation of Angola and Mozambique.*
- iii) The Portuguese Revolution did not favour the upkeep of links with Timor, nor did Portugal showed any interest in supporting economically and financially, the changes needed to develop the island.*
- iv) Both at political and diplomatic level - the Portuguese actuation was unable to interest or motivate the international community towards Timor and creating a strong opposition to the Indonesian expansionist intent.*
- v) The delay in nominating a new government for Timor, after April 1974, followed by hesitant moves regarding the definition of possible future options for the colony.*

These, amongst some other factors, serve only to convince the Timorese that the Portuguese might be willing to abandon them to their own devices. Although some political figures reiterate the promise of providing for a consultation on the will of the Timorese population, it is never admitted that if such will - independence or incorporation in Indonesia - is to be opposed by Indonesia, that Portugal will be willing to raise international support against any Indonesian threats.

Militarily, some other factors have to be taken into consideration, like the profound unwillingness of Portuguese officers to serve in that colonial outpost, so far away from the real events of a maturing Revolution. Simultaneously, the continuous political agitation within the ranks of the Armed Forces, with the populist revolutionary tendencies prevailing at the time and trying to force the Army to become politically active, discarding the old neutrality of its members, are transported to Timor.

Militarily, Timor is indefensible. It is distant, although small it will need vast resources to justify a higher ratio of professional military cadres. That is not the case. One point cannot be forgotten, the Governor Lt. Col. Lemos Pires fails to exert his basic responsibilities, as Commander-in-Chief and as Governor, to keep the law and order, after the UDT coup. Avoiding any risks of military confrontation with the warring factions of the Timorese, Lemos Pires tries to 'save face' to obtain the 'cheapest possible' solution of the problem, as far as Portugal is concerned. It may have looked like a brave decision at the time, trying, by all means, to establish a political dialogue between the warring factions, but the final result is disastrous.

However, it must be noted, how hard it might have been to force UDT and FRETILIN to accept the reimposition of the law

and order, by the Armed Forces, when these are so heavily in disarray, after the introduction of the so-called "Timorisation". Its allegiance might prove to be difficult since the new army is divided between loyalist political lines, and not much keen in reverting to the side of the old master [the Portuguese] against UDT, or FRETILIN.

At any moment, there is the small detachment of 85 specially trained paratroopers from Portugal. It might be argued that initially when the confrontation between UDT and FRETILIN is confined to the capital Dili, these paratroopers would be enough to restore peace. Outside the capital, the only military forces who have remained with a strict military hierarchic order of command, unaffected by the political partisanship, are the Cavalry Company of Bobonaro and the Rifles Company of Oé-cusse. The Portuguese elements are mostly absent of all military units, and it is hard to get some of them to try to organise the defence of the harbour and the military residential block, after the UDT takeover. They will be the very last ones, willing to get involved in the fighting.

It must not be forgotten that after the 25 April 1974, most sergeants and officers are deeply attracted by the chance of an early end of their commissions, with its subsequent return to Portugal. All these events are born out of a lengthy void of power, immediately after the Portuguese Revolution, when - the then Governor - Alves Aldeia is kept for so long as Governor when his deep compromise with the deposed regime is well-known. The nomination of Major Arnao Metello as representative of the Armed Forces Movement creates a double chain of command. It is a very ambiguous situation that only serves to propagate the idea, that Portugal is not caring about Timor, and wants to 'get rid of it'.

Metello leaves the territory in September 1974, among numerous conflicts with the Acting Governor, Herdade, and the unproven accusation that he was trying to 'sell Timor to Indonesia'. This accusation comes from the most conservative local forces and the pro-Portuguese associations. In October 1974 a new Company of the Military Police arrives and soon is known as the 'Red Company'. At the same time, five very active radical Timorese students return from Lisbon and manage to create a new image for ASDT, who is renamed FRETILIN.

Administratively the situation, as we show along this book, is almost chaotic, and the territory lacks the main staples and fuel. While some key political figures in Lisbon are advocating independence and self-determination, the Prime Minister [Mário Soares] sends [the Minister for Inter-territorial Coordination], Dr Almeida Santos to Timor, Australia and Indonesia, and is denying that Indonesia has any interest - whatsoever - over East Timor.

At the same time in Lisbon, an Indonesian delegation is making it very clear, that it is either incorporation or the maintenance of links with Portugal. Most Portuguese politicians never accept as a serious possibility any Indonesian intervention. Almeida Santos in a cable from Timor, after visiting Indonesia, stresses that Indonesia has no territorial ambitions over Timor but the Indonesians will never risk intervention while the Portuguese are still the legitimate keepers of peace and order in the region. It is only the lack of a Portuguese presence that provides them with an excuse and pretext for intervention.

In some ways, it is deeply disturbing for me to write about these events. I lived in Timor and fought for a better Timor, a

more just Timor. I fear that no peace is going to be ever possible to achieve. More than words is the pain, over the constant lack of interest that Timor entices. Like Pontius Pilate, everybody disowns East Timor. Portugal keeps declaring to be (yet) the administering power over Timor. After all the inaction it is no more than symbolic the presence for a few months of two Portuguese Navy corvettes in East Timor waters. Will it become another spike deeply embedded in the Portuguese conscience, or will the Portuguese ever admit their fault in the decolonising process?

As far as Australia is concerned we already know that both the Whitlam and Fraser governments wash their hands as well as they can, and are really glad to maintain their primaevial economical and political interests over the seabed boundaries, against any humanitarian considerations. The force of arms, the bellicosity, and all the economic and geopolitical interests are instruments of certain supremacy. Portugal loses possession of a very uncomfortable colony, far away and mostly forgotten. Without troops and without a rational decolonisation principle, the Portuguese peaceful approach becomes a mere spectator's role to let the main actors play their fighting scenes, and asks for the U.N. to solve the problem.

Of course, it is naive to believe that the U.N. will have achieved anything, where the powers that have any influence prefer to withdraw from their responsibilities. The problem to be fully understood has to be followed from its very own beginning: the naive 'revolutionary appeal' of turning Timor into an independent colony, just because our colonial Empire has just finished. Forgetting and ignoring all rules of international politics the initiation of the process is left to the Portuguese politicians, who are quick to invent parties and political representatives of the Timorese.

The decolonisation process calls for the self-determination of East Timor without assuring that such event will have to be based upon some solid background. The ASEAN countries are definitely not very sympathetic to a minuscule country being formed, becoming independent and hostile to the very same principles that rule that organisation and its major principles. This pure political naiveté is already on the cards as the Portuguese Chargé d'affaires in Jakarta, Dr Souza-Girão alerts: *"Lisbon must understand the dangers of perceiving the oriental mentality and the notion of "Indonesian democracy."*

Portugal despises this knowledge in its arrogant position of trying to recapture the prestige and the respect of the Empire long gone for. After inventing parties to represent the Timorese in their most legitimate aspirations, the Portuguese leave them at the mercy of all manipulating interests in the geopolitical region. Initially, they favour UDT, sometimes a bit overtly and some people realise that they start giving consolation prizes to FRETILIN, thus creating a real cleavage between the two extremes. The authorities never think much about the internal security of the territory, and even less, heed the advice on the possibility (or probability) of an Indonesian invasion. After no solution is advanced for the maintenance of the links between Dili and Lisbon, it is clear to most people that the easy way out will be to surrender slowly the reins of power. African decolonisation methods of very doubtful value, and yet to be tested in those days, are hurriedly followed without respecting cultural, economical and civilisational idiosyncrasies. This importation of western models never considers the hermetic characteristics of an oriental society, like the Timorese.

Suddenly, the Portuguese administration wakes up and discovers it no longer has any real power over the territory it is

supposed to administrate. Claiming the offended dignity of someone who has been robbed of its legitimate possessions, the administration leaves the Timorese to sort all the mess by themselves in a fratricidal conflict. Withdrawing to Ataúro, and refusing to let the Portuguese troops re-establish the law and order, the Governor assumes his symbolic position of guardian at a distance of the Portuguese presence on Timorese territory. Such symbolic presence apart from being fragile [futile?], can be better interpreted as a self-appointed exile.

With the escalation of the war, the Portuguese presence is not enough to counter the so long-awaited Indonesian invasion, and although there is no imminent danger for the garrison, Lisbon decides it is time to withdraw from Timorese territory. Probably, in the minds of the military that make such decision, the example of Portuguese Goa annexed by India in 1961 is still too vivid⁷⁰. So with the Portuguese flag fluttering all by itself on the Ataúro improvised fort, end more than 450 years of colonial domination. The flag always considered a symbol by the Timorese is left to guide them through the invasion and the annexation.

Just a certain penchant for symbols, like the very last one: after all troops [excluding the ones made prisoners] arrive safely at Lisbon, the Portuguese Government decides to send two corvettes to patrol the Timorese waters. While the Timorese still battle for their survival against another coloniser, and after about a third of them is annihilated by the invaders, Portugal rests in the fragile conviction that one day the United Nations would correct their mistakes and errors, of colonising and decolonising by omission.

⁷⁰ After initially deciding to fight the Indian Army on a ratio of 1 to ten, the Portuguese suffer the most humiliating surrender of its History. The Indian nationalistic upheaval led them to reconquer the Portuguese Indian colonies, on the western coast of the Indian sub-continent, of Goa, Daman, Diu and Nagar-a-vely.

Addenda I:

TIMOR: SOME FACTS AND DATA

1. LOCATION

Timor is an island on the South Pacific, between meridians 123° and 127° longitude east (of Greenwich) and parallels 8° 17' and 10° 22' latitude south. Timor is between the Wetar Banda Sea at north, the Suva Sea north-west and the Timor Sea at south, and is the easternmost of the Lesser Sunda Islands (Sumba, Sabu, Rore, Leti, Moua, Tanimbar, Seram and Buro.)

Timor is roughly 600 km. off Darwin [the nearest Australian airport] and about 2,200 km. from Jakarta [Indonesia's capital in the island of Java]. Timor is the biggest island in this sub-archipelago, spreading from NE to SE, 470 km. long (293 miles) and 100 km. (61 miles) wide with a total area of 30,775 sq. km. [Kuwait has only 17,818 sq. km.] The former Portuguese colony of Timor includes the eastern half of the island (East Timor), the enclave of Oé-cusse, the Ataúro Is. in the Greater Sunda Is. (twenty-three km. north of Dili), and the Jaco Islet on the eastern coast. Its name was always Timor and derives from the Malay term meaning East.

In the Timor Sea between Australia and East Timor, there are oil reserves considered to be among the twenty biggest in the world. In 1975, the population of the territory was deemed to be around 700, 000 [half of Kuwait's population]. The western part of the island belonging to Indonesia has around 11, 000 sq. km.

The boundary between East and West Timor was set between Portugal and the Netherlands by the Portuguese and Dutch Convention of 1st October 1904 and by an International Arbitration on 25 July 1914, with the Portuguese half having 14,953 sq. km. (5,774 sq. miles) 270 km. long (168 miles W S W - E N E, and 75 km. wide (48 miles by 120 km. (75 miles of borderland and 675 km. (419 miles of coast).

2. OROGRAPHY

The island is mountainous with some coastal plains that merge into regularly flooded mangrove swamps. The northern coast is mountainous with deep river valleys and no coastal plains while the southern coast is a vast alluvial plain with minor elevations. The countryside is extremely irregular with high ranges like the Ramelau whose highest point is the Tata Mai Lau (3,000 m., 9,842 ft.). Other Ridges include the Mata-Bia (2,400 m., 7,874 ft.), the Cablac (2,200 m., 7,218 ft.) and the Cailaco (1,900 m., 6,233 ft.) with Baucau and Fui-Loro tablelands dominating the eastern coast with its highest peak, the Lost World, at 1,700 m. (5,577 ft.)

3. HYDROGRAPHY

In Timor, there are no rivers and most creeks and rivulets are only temporary. During the rainy season, the torrents fill and sometimes even overflow the riverbeds, making it impossible to cross them but for very short periods of the day.

The main creeks and rivulets are Lois (made up of the Marobo, Gleno creek and others) whose estuary is 20 km. west of Maubara; Comoro, Laleia, and Seiçal all on the north coast, the longest being the Lacló with 80 km. (50 miles) with its estuary at Manatuto. The main ones on the South Coast are the Tafara, the Carau-Ulum, the Bé-Lulic, and the Irabere. East Timor has some lagoons like the Maubara, Suro-Béc, and Bé-Malai.

4. GEOLOGY

The most common theory is that Timor is a recent island that took 600.000 years to be formed. According to the Wegener School, Timor is not the result of a volcanic eruption. It is the result of a creasing of different plates, as shown by the stratified area of the Subões and the fracture of Cribas, both in the Manatuto region. No primary volcanic residue exists in East Timor but mud geysers exist at Ossú (eastern coast), Oé-cusse (the enclave on West Timor) and sulphuric waters at Marobo and Vai-Cana, and although no geological studies were ever done, some maritime fossils have been discovered at Baucau tablelands. East Timor is struck by minor tremors more than a hundred times each year.

5. CLIMATOLOGY

The climate in East Timor comprises three different zones:

Nth. Coast: max. 30 - 33 C, min. 20 - 25 C;

Sth. Coast: max. 25 - 33 C, min. 18 - 24 C;

Lower Central Mountains: max. 23 - 30 C, min. 14 - 21 C; Higher Central Mountains: max. 16 - 24 C, min. 4 - 13 C.

The hottest months are also the most humid ones: November to February and the dry and cool weather is normally from June to August. The central ranges and the southern coast have two rainy seasons: November to March and June to August, although the monsoons are somewhat irregular. The annual average precipitation is 1,475 ml. (58 in.), with the maximum at Bobonaro and Fatubéssi (82%) and the minimum at Ainaro (66%).

6. ECONOMY

j) Commerce and Industries

The Portuguese administration retook control of the colony after the serious devastation during the 2nd World War and the Japanese occupation of the territory, with its main priorities being the reorganisation of the administrative structures, the renewal of agricultural traits and civil engineering (mainly in the building industry).

Commercial and industrial activities were left, as before, to private enterprise. Similarly to what occurred in Indonesia before the anti-communist rebellion of 1965, the commercial activities were all in the hands of a Chinese minority, specialised in retailing. Very industrious and active, ignoring consumerism, they had about a dozen important trading companies with total dominance of commerce in East Timor. Petrol and oil were imported from Singapore and Australia; milk and flour from Australia; concrete and cement from Japan and Taiwan; machines and various technical equipment from Japan, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore and Europe; textiles and shoes from Macao and Hong Kong.

The main exports were coffee beans, copra/coconut, timber, peanuts and rubber, but the only one that really mattered in terms of volume was coffee. Although the capital outlays were small they represented locally a huge investment and the industries were then no more than craftsmanship and very incipient. The latest statistics provided by the Portuguese administration, refer that in 1973, no more than 90 companies with a capital outlay of Escudos 21,000,000\$00 (approx. 840,000 at 1973 exchange rates) provided jobs for 500 people in sawmills, bakeries, soft drink factories. The arts and crafts although of a very high quality had a minimal weight in export terms and were confined to jewellery, ceramics and weaving.

ii) Fauna and Flora. Agriculture and Fisheries.

Cattle's breeding in Timor was restricted to swine, bubaline (water buffaloes), equine, and caprine. No valid statistics were available because declared cattle were taxable. Typical wild animals were marsupials, crocodiles, cockatoos (lorikeets, cacoas), deer, boar (*Cervus timorensis*), monkeys and a wide range of snakes. In some places one could see the "mountain prawn" or "river prawn" a mixed species that when transported by the torrents cling to trees until the water level stabilised, or the common and sonorous toké, a very noisy lizard whose age is determined by the number of times it articulates the sound "toké" [pronounced toh keh]. The sea, mainly untouched, was very rich in seafood. Past the coral reefs different types of sharks Sunrays, groupers, sawfish control the sea population growth. Small alligators (Caymans) dwell by the estuary of the creeks. Agriculture was traditional and archaic, not much different from contemplating one's navel and production grew by itself without much of human intervention. The tropical forests once filled the eastern coast and parts of the southern coast but have been reduced to a trickle, after more than 400 hundred years of colonial felling.

Sandalwood, rosewood, chestnut wood, teakwood, ai-tassi, forest oak (beefwood) and palavan (*eucalyptus alba*) have enough clout to become again important economically, if and when reforestation is done. The Portuguese trade with Timor started in 1520 because of the huge sandalwood reserves, Timor was barely self-sufficient until the first half of this century, and its diet comprised: wheat, rice, cassava, beans, sweet potatoes (yam), and European potato (white), meat and fish is seldom eaten. Fruit varieties include papaw (papaya), mangoes, lemon, grapefruit, breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*), and coconuts. The agriculture, fisheries, and cattle breeding were very primitive. The highly mountainous soil eroded by torrential irregular creeks and deforestation washed the humus away to the sea, making it even harder to cultivate. The colourful "beiros" [dugout canoes] made of bark with two cane stabilisers and woven straw sails did not provide for much fish. Ichthyological, the seas are rich, but (until 1975) the local "Bere-mau" (male Timorese) used to spends all day, from sunrise to sunset, half submerged in water with a bamboo pole and a primitive fishing net waiting for the fish to bite the bait.

iii) Oil

The oil exploration started in the late sixties with speculation that it could and would change dramatically the face of the then Portuguese Timor. The colonial administration, very lackadaisical for the past 400 years, suddenly dreamed of an

upsurge of wealth that could perhaps catapult the entire Portuguese economy and stave off the impending disaster of the end of the dictatorship. In small numbers, people were lured to Timor with highly adventurous and speedily drafted projects. In practical terms, though, both the Timor Oil Ltd. drilling on the South Coast (Suai) with very primitive means and the more sophisticated offshore explorations done by Burma Oil/BHP showed no large oil reserves.

Burma Oil almost created havoc in the population, by operating a couple of helicopters with equipment and personnel for six months in 1974, and flying them back to their headquarters in Perth, twice a week. Then, suddenly a third oil group "Oceanic" installed the first oil rig platform on the Timor Sea. The small local media contingent started believing that the ballyhoo was probably more fire than the smoke initially assumed, yet no leaks were forthcoming, either from Portuguese Government sources or others. The mystery surrounding these oil drills was then much subdued. Ten years later the "why?" question then asked would be resoundingly answered by the Australian and Indonesian governments.

Addenda II:

(MY AUSTRALIAN PRESENCE ON A) SEMINAR ON EAST TIMOR, PORTUGAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

1) BRIEF SUMMARY

Between May 9 and 11, 1991 the University of Oporto in Portugal came alive with debates on the fate of East Timor. Promoted by its Chancellery for the third year in a row, the Seminar attracted Parliamentarians, journalists, jurists, Timorese National Convergence representatives, East Timorese, political personalities and individuals. That year the motto of the Seminar was “Complementary responsibilities on the same fight for justice, peace and respect for international law,” and was officially opened by the highest Portuguese authority: the President of the Republic, accompanied by ambassadors of Brazil and African Portuguese-speaking countries, and Portuguese government representatives.

2) THE OPENING SESSION

The opening ceremony of this III Seminar on East Timor was followed by a debate on “The European Community / Indonesia / East Timor” and an intervention of the Portuguese European Parliamentarians and international journalists. The next day it was hard working sessions with East Timorese in preparation for the future, with the intervention of the “Parliament Ad-Hoc Committee for East Timor,” representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the National Convergence, and international solidarity groups, followed by a session on the international public opinion, governments and international bodies.

The last day was occupied with future preparations of the support work, seconded by Lord Avebury, as a founder of the “Parliamentarians for East Timor”, a written address by Michel Robert (of the Sorbonne University) and members of the National Convergence, as well as members of the Christian groups and solidarity support groups. With the presence of Portugal’s President of the Republic and foreign dignitaries, the Seminar started under the assurance that: *“Portugal will defend the right to self-determination and independence for the people of East Timor until they actually achieve it.”*

The first session had the participation among others of the representatives in Portugal of the Timorese National Convergence, representing FRETILIN and UDT, who stressed the importance of the last peace proposals from the guerrilla Commander Xanana Gusmão.

The coordinator of the Seminar, Professor Barbedo de Magalhães had a fiery speech stating the parallels between the invasion of Kuwait and East Timor, the speaker mentioned also the end of the two powers Cold War, the increased freedom and democracy bouts everywhere from Asia to Africa. Going on to criticise Indonesia for its brutal, murderous

military regime erected on top of at least half a million dead and 1, 500, 000 political prisoners Tapols, Professor Barbedo expressed his revolt against the support given to that regime by the USA, Japan, Australia and some European countries.

Criticising the Pope's position about East Timor, at the same his Holiness was visiting Portugal for the Fátima celebrations, Professor Barbedo said that:

"It hurts that after fifteen years of genocide, the Holy See has kept its silence on East Timor, seldom broken by some watered down preoccupation on its cultural identity. The retention of three hundred letters from Roman Catholics bishops expressing their support to the proposal of a referendum as suggested by Mgr. Ximenes Belo, Bishop of Dili, was as far as we know, ordered by the Vatican, and it horrifies us such methods are being used to silence a crime against mankind like the one perpetrated against the people of East Timor.

It is not only this silence, orchestrated by the Vatican, its Press Corps, the Secretariat but also the manipulation of Catholic publications where East Timor is mentioned as part of Indonesia where nothing is happening. We understand the interests of the Vatican in trying to protect the flourishing minority Indonesian Catholic Church in the most populated Muslim nation, but we cannot accept that the Church of Rome will sacrifice the Church and people of East Timor in order to please those interests.

On the eve of the arrival of His Holiness, the Pope, I endorse a document already delivered to the Apostolic Nunciature in Lisbon recognising the "indefeasible right of the East Timorese to self-determination, asking the Indonesian government to withdraw without delay all its troops from the territory and asking His Holiness to use His voice on the international arena to defend the legitimate rights of the people of East Timor, whose blood and suffering so much hurts our consciences."

In fact, during the next couple of days, incidents and demonstrations regarding East Timor marred the Pope's visit. The first was a Press Release mentioning Timor as the 27th Indonesian province; another was a speech mentioning the great Portuguese Discoveries from America to Indonesia.

On the second day of his visit, the Pope was forced to concede to an interviewer from the Portuguese Catholic Radio Broadcaster "Radio Renascença" his "*deep worry over East Timor whose problems have to be solved according to the principles of justice and in accordance with Human and National Rights.*"

This was the first time ever that the Pope admitted such a contentious point. UDT (Timorese Democratic Union Party) remembered the request of the Bishop of Dili, Mgr. Ximenes Belo: "Do not let the East Timorese die" and went on to stress the importance for Portugal of keeping its language and culture alive in the region.

The Portuguese European Parliamentarians and journalists concluded the first session with a vivid debate where the actual situation of the debates on East Timor, and the strategies for future intervention in the Strasbourg Parliament were discussed. The actual membership of Portugal in the EEC has markedly improved a more vocal attitude of the

European Parliament, yet not proven by facts, such as arms embargoes. It was mentioned that all European countries, including Portugal, have a lively trade with Indonesia, vital to the Jakarta regime but not essential for the EEC.

3) AUSTRALIA'S PRESENTATION

In the afternoon session of the second day, there was a roundtable on international public opinion, and the main speaker was the Australian Journalists' Association spokesperson for the Seminar who read some messages from Australian entities. In his speech, the author of this work stated:

"When I left East Timor on June 1975, I left there all my belongings on a trip to Portugal, and I refused to accept the voices of those who were then predicting the worse. When I was ready to return in August, I am confronted by the lack of access to East Timor due to the start of the civil war. Moreover, until this day, I have not been able to return.

"On that same year, the Australian colony of Papua New Guinea became independent. Today is a minor player towards the Indonesian giant neighbouring nation and has long stopped protecting the pro-independence movement of OPM (Organisi Papua Merdeka) that since the 60s have been fighting for the independence of the western side of the island, annexed by Indonesia.

"Similarly, the East Timorese have been fighting since 1975 for the independence of their nation from the Javanese yoke. I want to state here that there is a minority in Australia that feels offended and insulted by their country's attitude towards East Timor since the economic and political interests are stronger than the need for defending human rights.

Most journalists are dominated by a media concentration where the mass media depends on the capitalistic concentration of power around a few, to survive, and even if they wanted they would not be able to write freely about East Timor. Most mediums in Australia pretend to ignore the world and they do not even disguise the fact.

"A xenophobic parochialism still pervades the Australian media, and although we, Australians claim to be the most multicultural nation on earth we still live with our strong emotional ties with the UK, our ideological ties to the USA and our linguistic ties with Canada. Although we are in a geopolitical area of South-East Asia and the Pacific, we pretend that we are in Europe. In future decades we will become more Asianized but in the meantime, our mentality is still very much a western one.

"The case of East Timor has been taken up by politicians, academic and by the person on the street, but it always looks as being too far away when compared with atrocities in Chile, Cambodia, Latin America or Africa. However, Timor is only 400 miles away from Darwin, in the Northern Territory and it is always easier to defend the Human Rights of those who are further afield and that mean not much to us in civilisation terms.

"That is the reason why I decided to base my presentation to this Seminar on written statements by Australian politicians, individuals and support groups. Before I finish my presentation, let me assure you that there is a strong

message coming from the Australian Aborigines, that fabulous race who more than 60 thousand years ago invented the ecological balance, and that up to this day still does not have the most basic right. From them, we receive a message that identifies their fight with the neighbouring cousins of East Timorese.”

Messages from Australia:

a) From AJA’s⁷¹ Federal Secretary Christopher Warren:

“While the AJA has no specific policy regarding East Timor it has a long-standing commitment to the principle of a free media and to the rights of journalists to report freely and safely in all parts of the world. The deaths of five Australian journalists in East Timor over 15 years ago strengthened that commitment which we pursue actively in our own region and through our affiliation to the International Federation of Journalists. Please convey my best wishes to the Conference on behalf of AJA.”

b) From Laurie Ferguson, Convenor of the [Australian] Parliamentarians for East Timor, Federal Member for Reid:

“On behalf of the Australian Parliamentarians for East Timor, I would express solidarity with your conference. Unfortunately, Parliamentary sitting makes attendance impossible. The last year witnessed an upsurge of media coverage of Timor, whether in negotiations offers, Gusmão’s Xanana interview, or Gulf War parallels. We remain committed to constructive criticism of Australia’s role in suppressing Timorese self-determination.”

c) From Michele Turner, Writer (Deceased 1995)

“My grandfather was an Australian soldier kept alive by Timorese during WW2, without their care I would never have known him. According to a 1946 Census, over forty thousand Portuguese Timorese died during WW2. They were, as usual in wars of occupation, mainly children and old people. They died of starvation assisted illness because of the disruption to a subsistence economy caused by fighting troops and Allied bombing. When we compare this with Australian Pacific War losses of 46,000 and consider the relative population sizes (450,000 Portuguese Timorese, over seven million Australians), and the fact that Australia was not occupied, we get an idea of that war’s significance to Timorese.

“Since 1982 I have been interviewing and collecting information for a book nearing completion called “TIMOR LEST/E” spanning East Timor last three invasions (Japanese, Australian and Javanese). What I have learned about the last and most devastating invasion and occupation since 1975 puts it close to a genocide. ABC Radio National broadcast a social history series with actors reading excerpts from the “Timor Lest/E” interviews in March 1991, about which they got a wide and anguished public response. With a well-known local filmmaker, I am currently working on a script for

⁷¹ Australian Journalists’ Association.

a documentary about Timorese women's experience of war. The issue of East Timor and Australia's relation to it is one which will not go away, and about which Australians of conscience are at last becoming increasingly aware."

d) Message from Paddy Kenneally, W. W. II Soldier in Timor:

"26 April 1991, Yesterday Australia wide the people were commemorating Anzac Day and the landing on Gallipoli. In all parts of the island, continent memorial services were held in honour of the men and women who gave their lives in the service of their country. I marched with my unit the 2nd/2nd Independent Company (Later renamed the 2/2nd Commando Squadron) which served in East Timor from Dec. 17, 1941, to Dec. 16, 1942.

"My body was marching down the streets of Sydney, my mind was ranging far and wider over the mountains of East Timor. From Dili, west to Cailaco, south to Betano and east to Ossurua. The Postos and the people who dwelt in those mountains were quite familiar to me. The people who gave so much to the "Australie soldado" to help him forget his war against the Japanese army.

"Those wonderful people filled my mind as I marched. The reprisals they suffered, villages burned, livestock killed and crops destroyed, many of them killed all because they helped the Australians. By the end of the war in August 1945, up to 60, 000 of these defenceless people had died from starvation, disease, excessive hard labour or executions and beatings. They were a neutral country, the war was not of their making. They were invaded by the Australian and Japanese alike, they had no means of defence. Their losses were far, far greater than the casualties suffered by all Australian forces in all theatres of war in World War II.

"Surely, we had a debt to these gallant and peaceful people. We repaid them by completely ignoring them, by aiding and abetting their new invaders, the Indonesians. From December 1975 to the present time, the conduct of Federal Governments has been shameful. They have recognised the military takeover by Indonesia. They have granted Indonesia, millions of dollars in aid and signed a treaty with them, the so-called Gap Treaty despite the fact that the United Nations refuses to recognise the military takeover.

"As a people, we have little to be proud of either in this matter. Thank God, that position is changing. The Australian Council for Overseas Aid has always been active in the cause of self-determination for East Timor. Shirley Shackleton and Patsy Thatcher both of whom have visited East Timor work untiringly for the same cause. Michele Turner has spent years researching and putting on record the lives of people who have suffered under the Indonesian regime. Many religious orders are interested in this work for the people of East Timor.

"Only this morning [26 April 1991], a nun gave me some pamphlets on East Timor. They hold meetings, show videos and are interested in getting Timorese people to speak and address those meetings. SBS screened an extremely good documentary "Shadow over East Timor" produced by Mandy King and Jim Kesterven. Mandy King has also visited East Timor last year.

“The 2/2nd Commando Association in West Australia is once more taking a deep interest in East Timor affairs. This association has a non-political clause in its constitution, which precludes it from taking part on political questions. Its members, of course, are quite free to espouse any cause as individuals. This they have done in the case of East Timor since 1975, and increasingly so since 1989, following visits to East Timor by individual 2/2nd men. With so much interest in East Timor, in Australia, USA and Britain it is now up to the Portuguese Government to push the cause of East Timor in the United Nations. That body does not recognise the military takeover of East Timor by Indonesia.

“Portugal is still recognised as the administering power in East Timor by that organisation. With the end of the Gulf War, and the plight of the Kurds in Iraq the time is ripe to focus attention on the suffering of the East Timorese. The brutal conquest of East Timor, was a far greater offence against a weak defenceless people, than the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Yet not one nation has raised the question of economic sanctions or the use of force against Indonesia if it does not comply with the United Nations demand that it withdraw from East Timor. How can the Nations of the world condemn and right the Kuwait invasion, and condone and do nothing about Indonesia’s invasion of East Timor? It is time that this position was rectified.”

e) Message from James Kesteven, Shadow Films, Co-producer of the Documentary “Shadow Over East Timor”, Broadcast by SBS in April 1991:

“Dear Conference Members: As the producers of the Australian documentary “The Shadow over East Timor” we wish you all the best for your timely conference on East Timor. Completed in February this year, “The Shadow over East Timor” was broadcast in April on Australia’s multicultural broadcasting network SBS Television.

“The overwhelming response from the TV audience was one of outrage at both the covering up of the war in East Timor and at the double standards of the dominant world powers in helping Kuwait while turning a blind eye to the rights of the people in East Timor. In particular, the Australian TV audience was outraged at the Australian Government signing the Timor Gap Oil Treaty.

“The feedback to us is that Portugal has their full support in taking Australia to the International Court of Justice. Having been involved in the making of this documentary over a 7 year period we can see that now is the time, more critical than ever, that as much pressure as possible must be brought to bear on Governments, politicians, diplomats and the United Nations to respect the rights of the East Timorese people as constituted within U.N. legislation, guidelines and resolutions.”

f) Message from Raymond Longbottom, Adviser on Aboriginal Issues for (ACHRCS, the Aboriginal Corporation for Homeless and Rehabilitation Community Services:

“The Australian Aboriginal people want to remind the people taking part in this Seminar that no Olympic Games should be held in Australia until the aboriginal people have got back what is theirs. Having made that statement, we want to

stress that as neighbours and akin we recognise the right of every nation and every people to attain self-determination. That has not been the case in East Timor.

“Our government(s) always so much worried about Human Rights’ violations in distant parts of the world prefer to turn a blind eye to the situation in East Timor and sign an illegal agreement with the Indonesians for the exploitation of the East Timorese wealth in oil and natural gas. Likewise, the Australian Government has been for the past 200 years exploiting the riches and the wealth of the Australian Aborigines and unwilling to provide them with decent living standards and human rights. I believe the time is ripe for the world to acknowledge that the East Timorese and the Australian Aborigines are being denied their rights to self-determination and ownership of their land and natural resources.”

The audience at the Seminar applauded with a standing ovation these messages from Australia, the strongest ever to be heard from Australia.

CONCLUSION

23 YEARS AFTER: “EAST TIMOR, THE WINDS OF CHANGE.”

Mankind has done giant leaps towards the supremacy of Human Rights and the Rights of People, if we try to look in retrospect to the political evolution in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, South America and the rest of the world. All this happened amid historical hesitations, advances, and regresses, amid conflicts that became acuter or that were put on the back burner while some others flourished. Famine still affects and maims millions of infants every year, and we still witness political imprisonment, torture, and wars that the human madness keeps on feeding. Not all revolutions became flourishing political springs and some were smashed in blood, foreign occupation still persists and many nations and peoples are without statehood, cut by artificial borders or forcefully integrated into nations that are neither theirs nor did they chose.

The shining star of President Suharto has been diminishing for more than 32 years became a falling star on 21 May 1998 when he was forced to relinquish the power since he took in a bloodshed Revolution in 1965.

We could be led to think that his good star had started losing its shine during the student confrontations of 1974 or ten years later when ABRI (the Indonesian Army) detained some Muslims near the Rawa Badak Mosque in the capital. A few days later, on September 12, 1984, a crowd of people who demanded their liberation is brutally massacred and at least 60 people killed in Tanjung Priok [Jakarta].

Amir Biki, a leading Muslim leader was one of the first to be killed by the forces of General Benny Murdani. Known as having commanded the university students' battalion in 1965 to help General Suharto to establish the “New Order,” he served as a major mediator between Muslim people and the authorities.

Four days after the Tanjung Priok massacre, a group of 50 politicians and retired generals rebelled and demand respect for the 1945 Constitution. The group had three ex-ministers: Sjafruddin Prawiranegara [ex-Finance Minister], Burhanuddin Harapan [ex-Prime Minister], H. M. Sanusi, [ex-Minister for Industry in the first Suharto Cabinet] between 1966 - 1968, generals Ali Sadikin [Navy, ex-Governor of Jakarta], Hugeng [Police Chief until 1972], General Azis Saleh, General Suyitno Sukitno and General H. R. Dharsono ex-Secretary-General of ASEAN [Organisation of the South-East Asian Countries].

A prominent Indonesian lawyer, Mulya Lubis says that *“something is happening that is not being reported in the papers, but the next couple of years can become explosive.”* Suharto, on the other hand, definitely aghast answers to a Newsweek journalist's question: *“If they want to replace me without respect for the Constitution I will smash them, be they military or politicians.”*

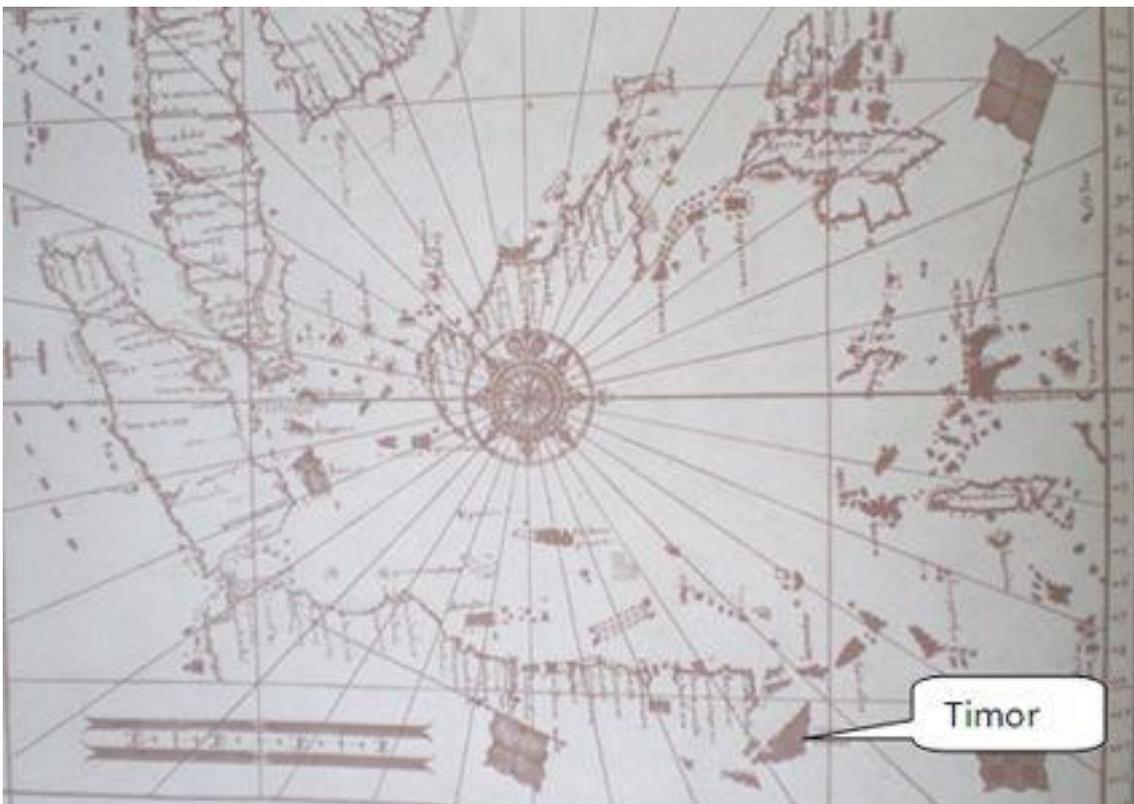
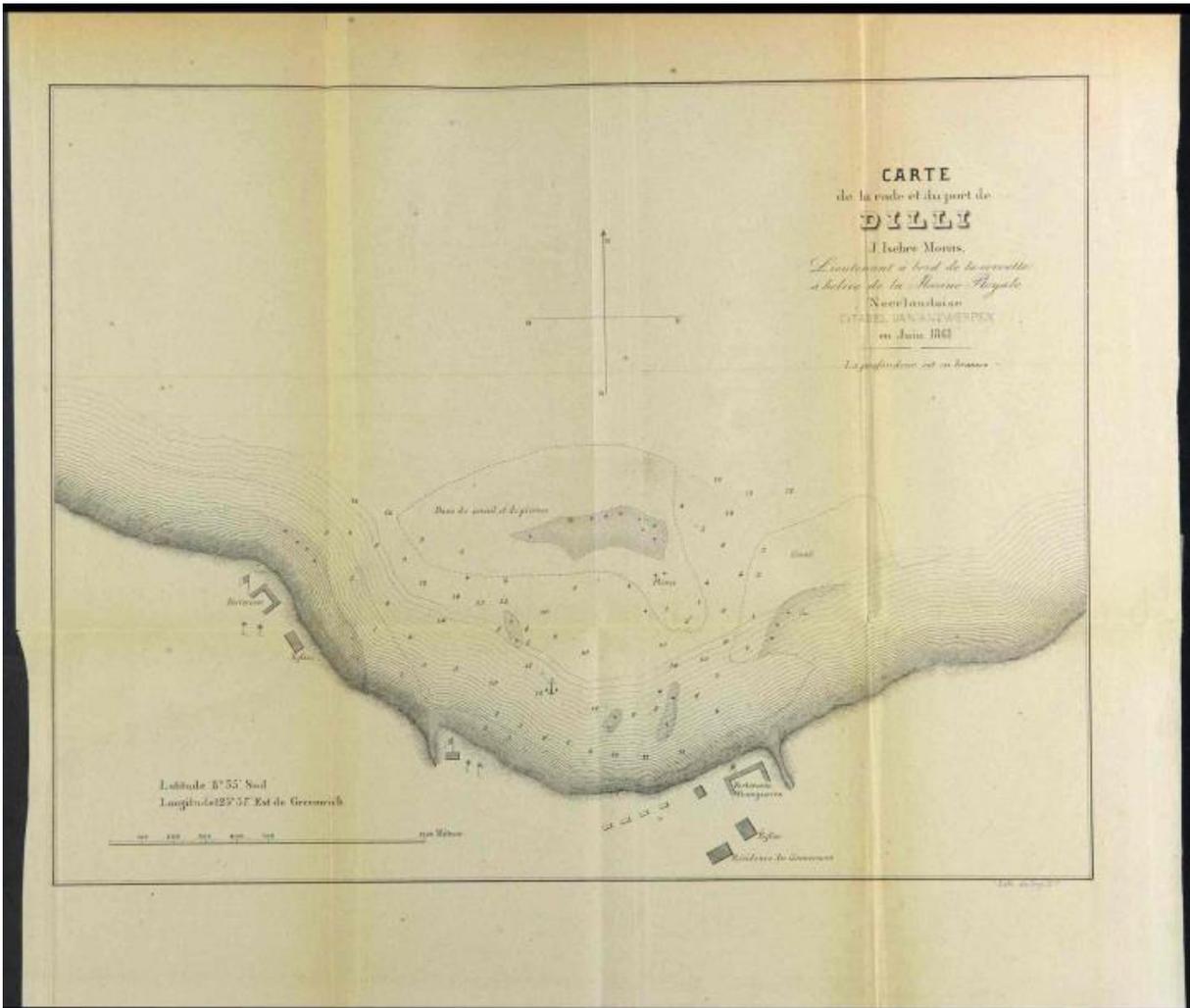
A few years' back Suharto would not get exasperated like this nor would lose composure. General Benny Murdani (ex-defence Minister), for many years the designated successor and Vice-President, said then that it is possible that demonstrations similar to the popular uprisings like in the Philippines [1986], South Korea [1989] and the 'Petition of the 50' were a sign of that.

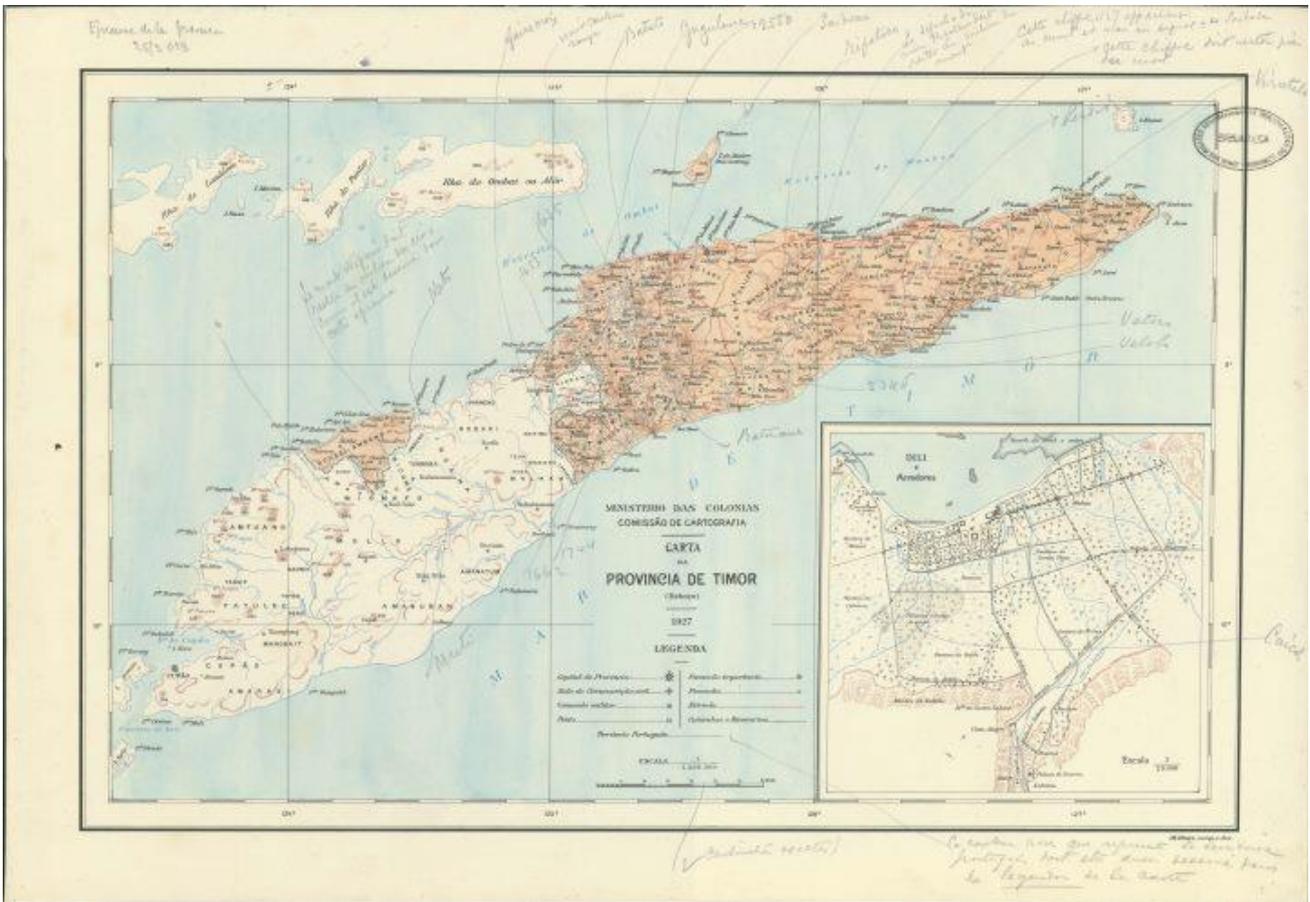
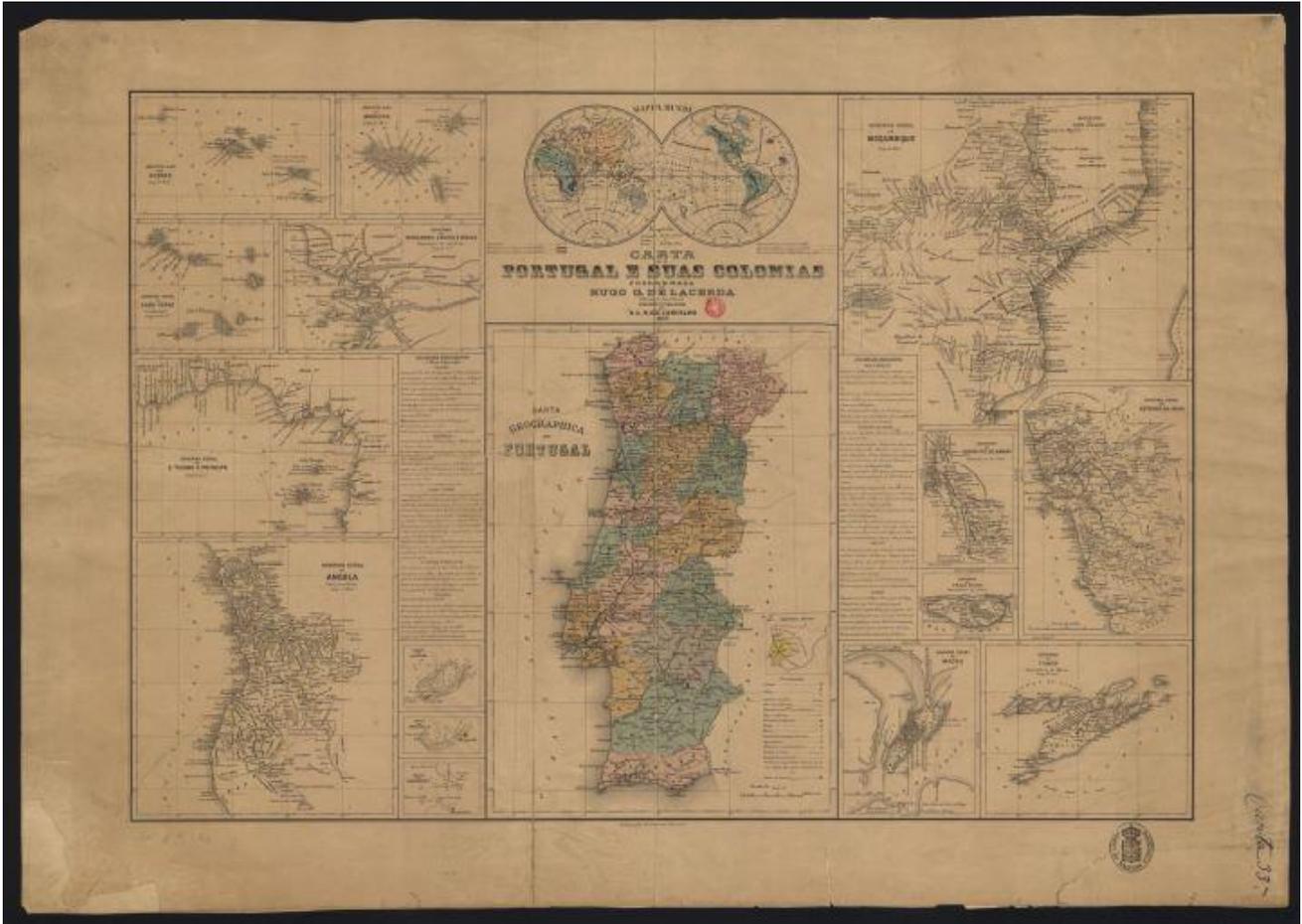
Were it not for the economic Asian crisis at the end of 1997 leading to student demonstrations (once more and always, the students) and cornering Suharto, its economic Revolution to shreds, a devaluation of the rupee reaching 70 per cent, street riots and mob demonstrations clamouring for rice, led no alternative to the old general, abandoned by all, without much support from the military and disinherited by the Americans (they asked him to resign on 20 May 1998), but to leave the scene, leaving behind what he found on the streets back in 1965: chaos.

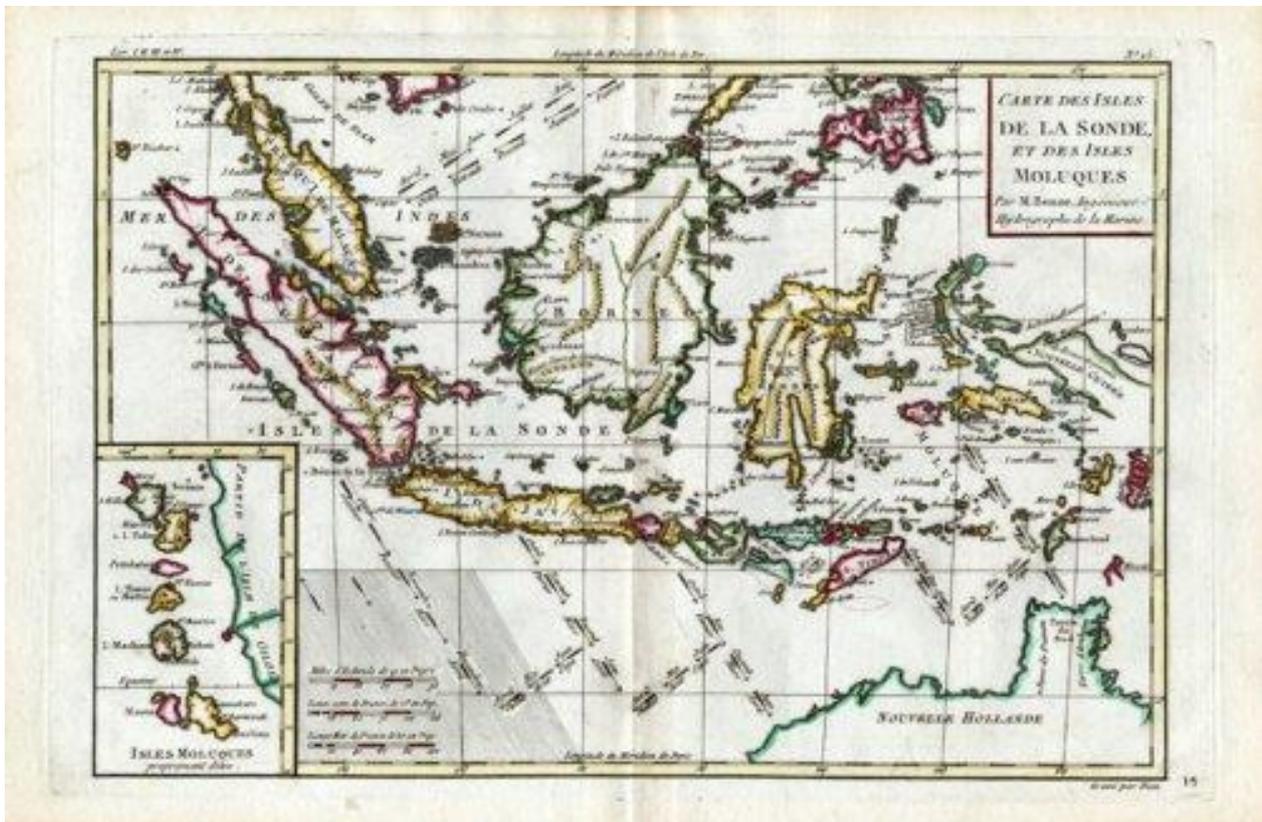
An interim President was summoned on the caricature of one-week-old Vice-President Yusuf Habibie, a megalomaniac engineer educated in Germany who tried to create an aeronautical industry and other follies where millions of dollars were lost. The future is still a child when we write these words for us to guess what will happen to Republik Indonesia with its 13,000 islands, hundreds of ethnic groups and languages and 200 million people rudderless.

After reading this, let us come now back to East Timor where the population still awaits a plebiscite promised by the Portuguese in 1974-1975 and to Jakarta's Cipinang gaol where Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão (captured in 1992, a year after the Santa Cruz massacre) is closer than ever to reacquire his freedom to revive some of the deeper aspirations of the East Timorese, delayed for more than two decades of violence and genocide.

Thanks to all the Timorese, that graced my life...with their joy of living and being free



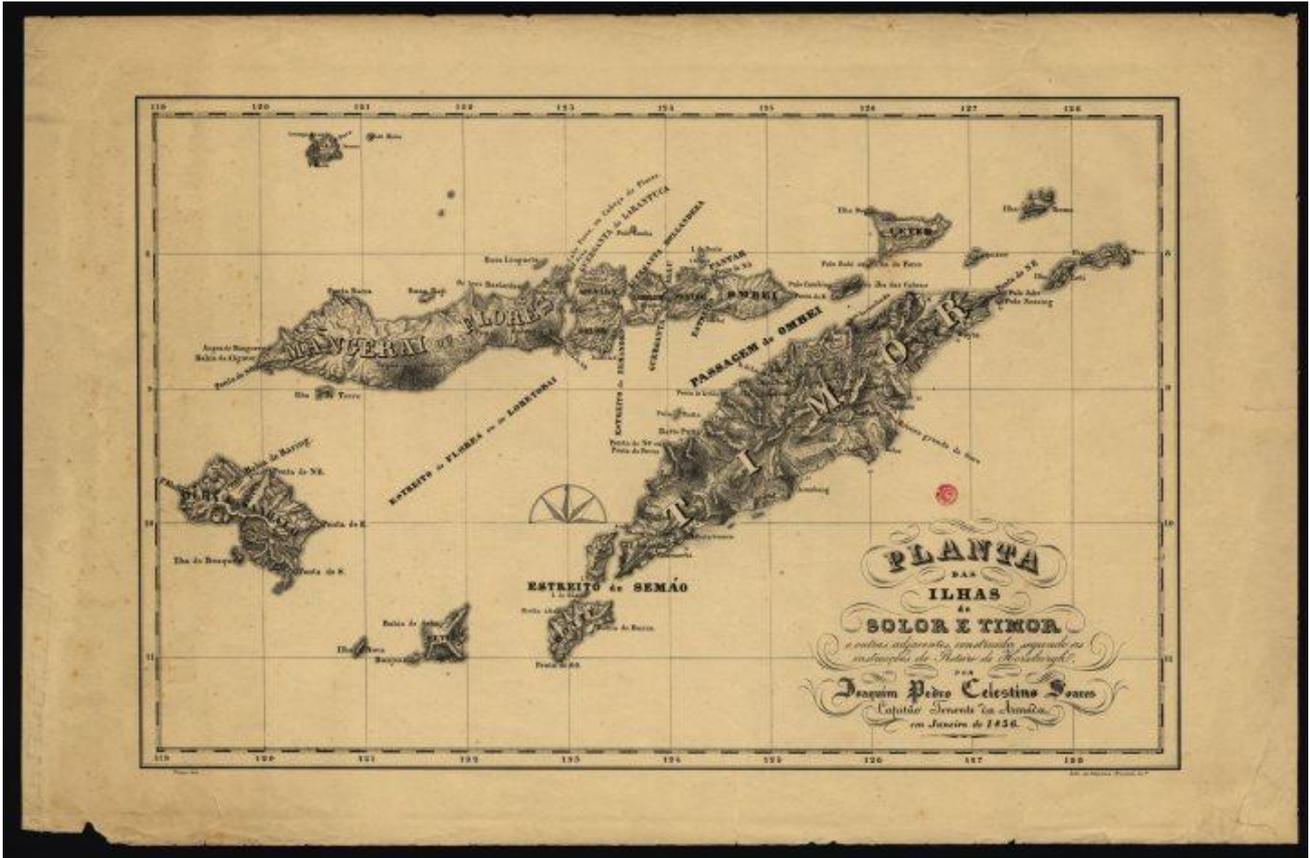




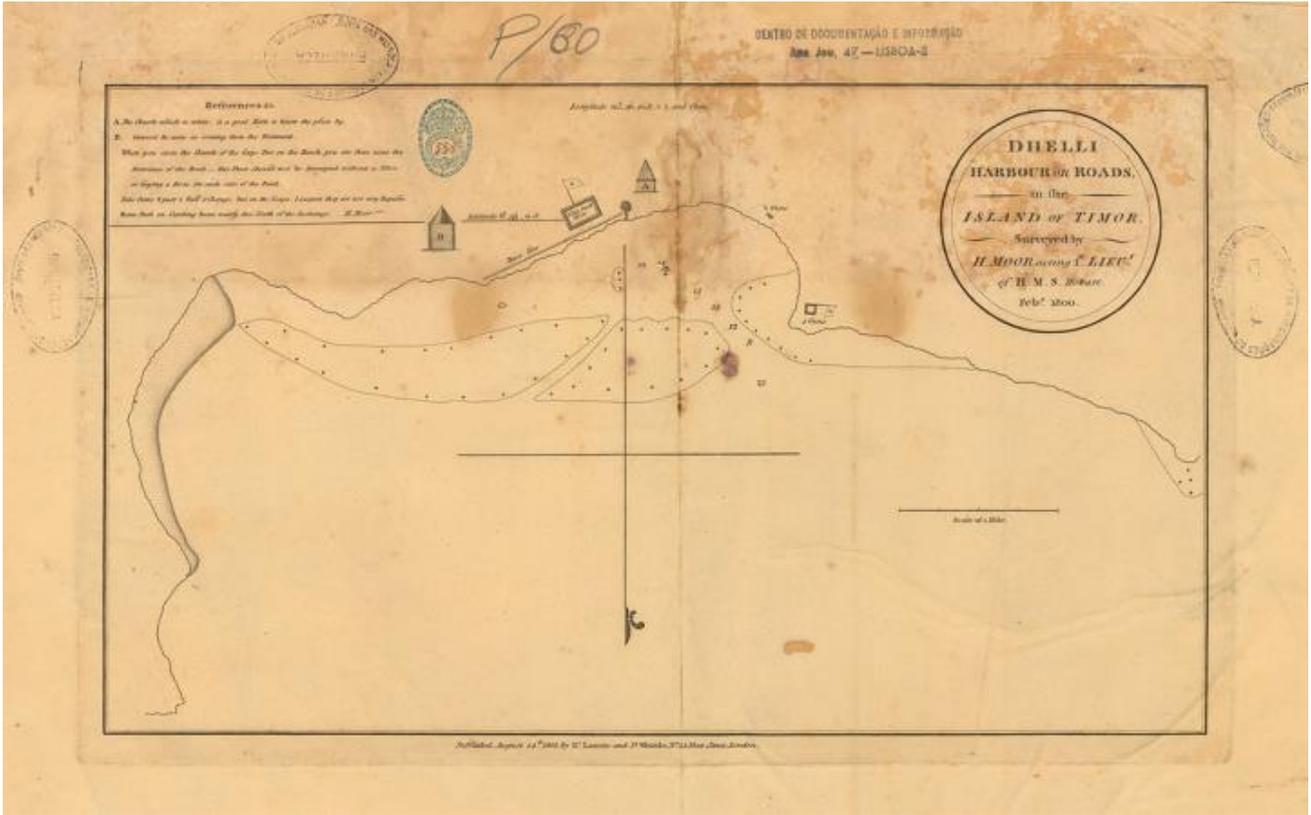
East Timor

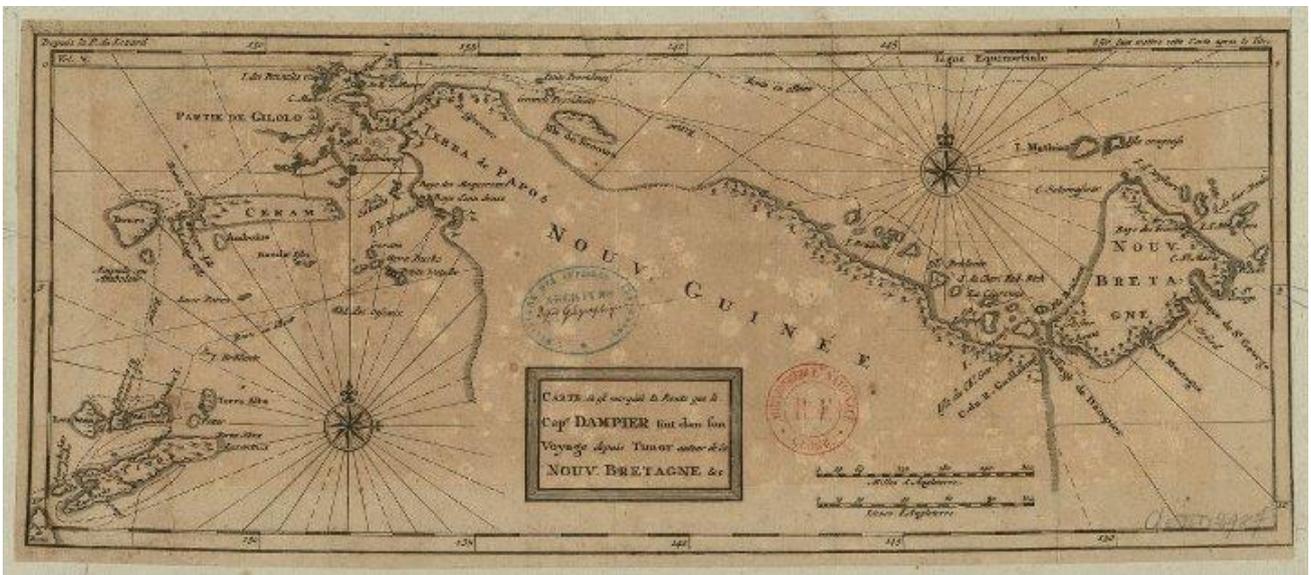
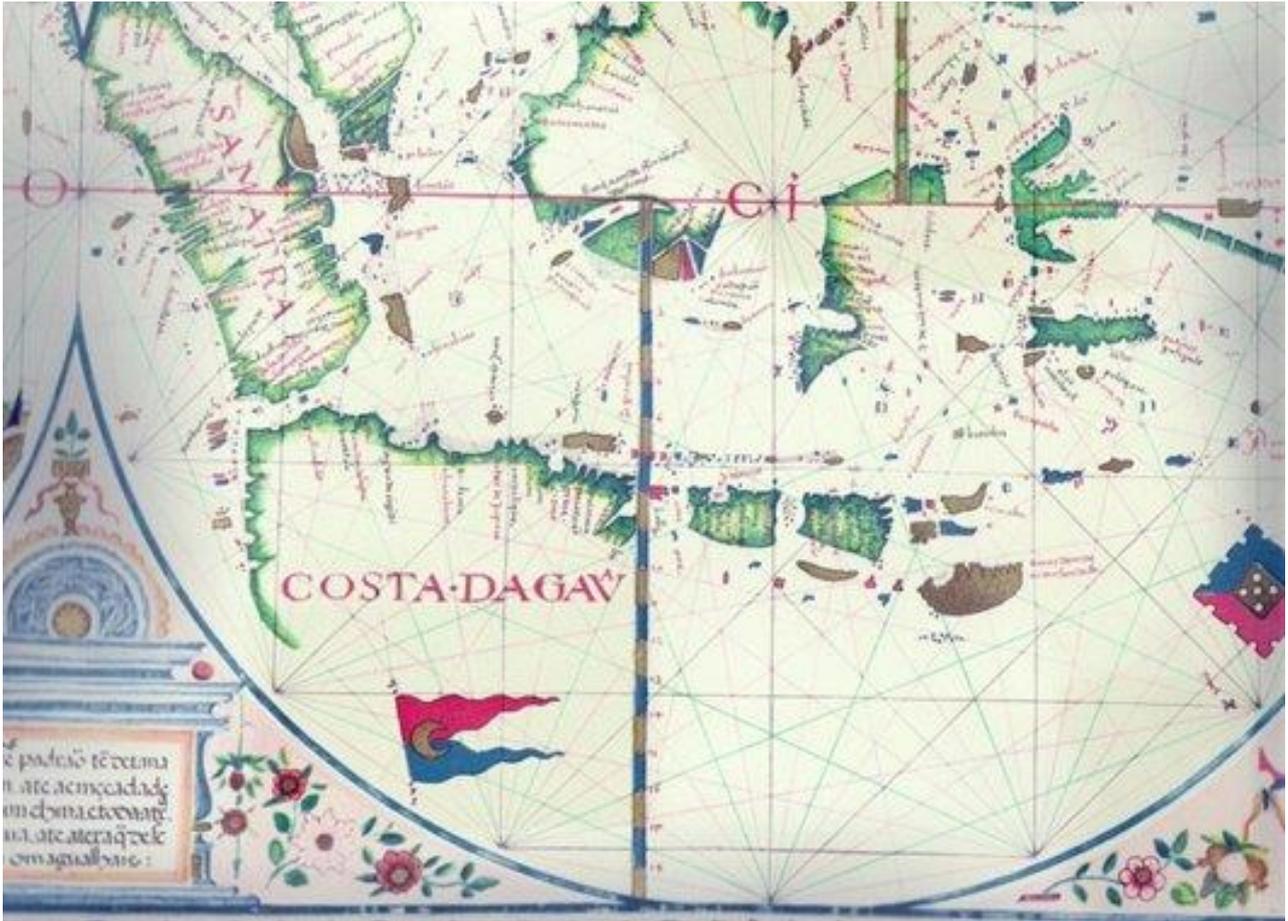


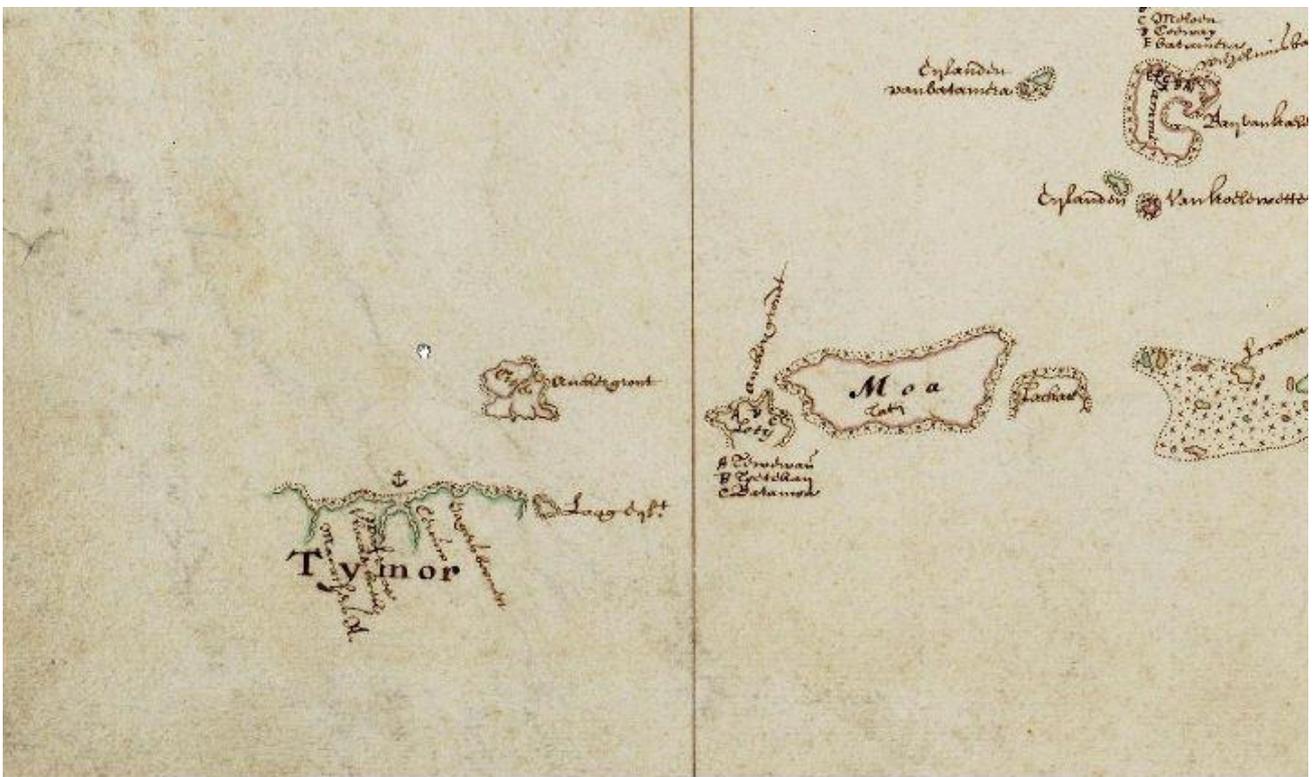
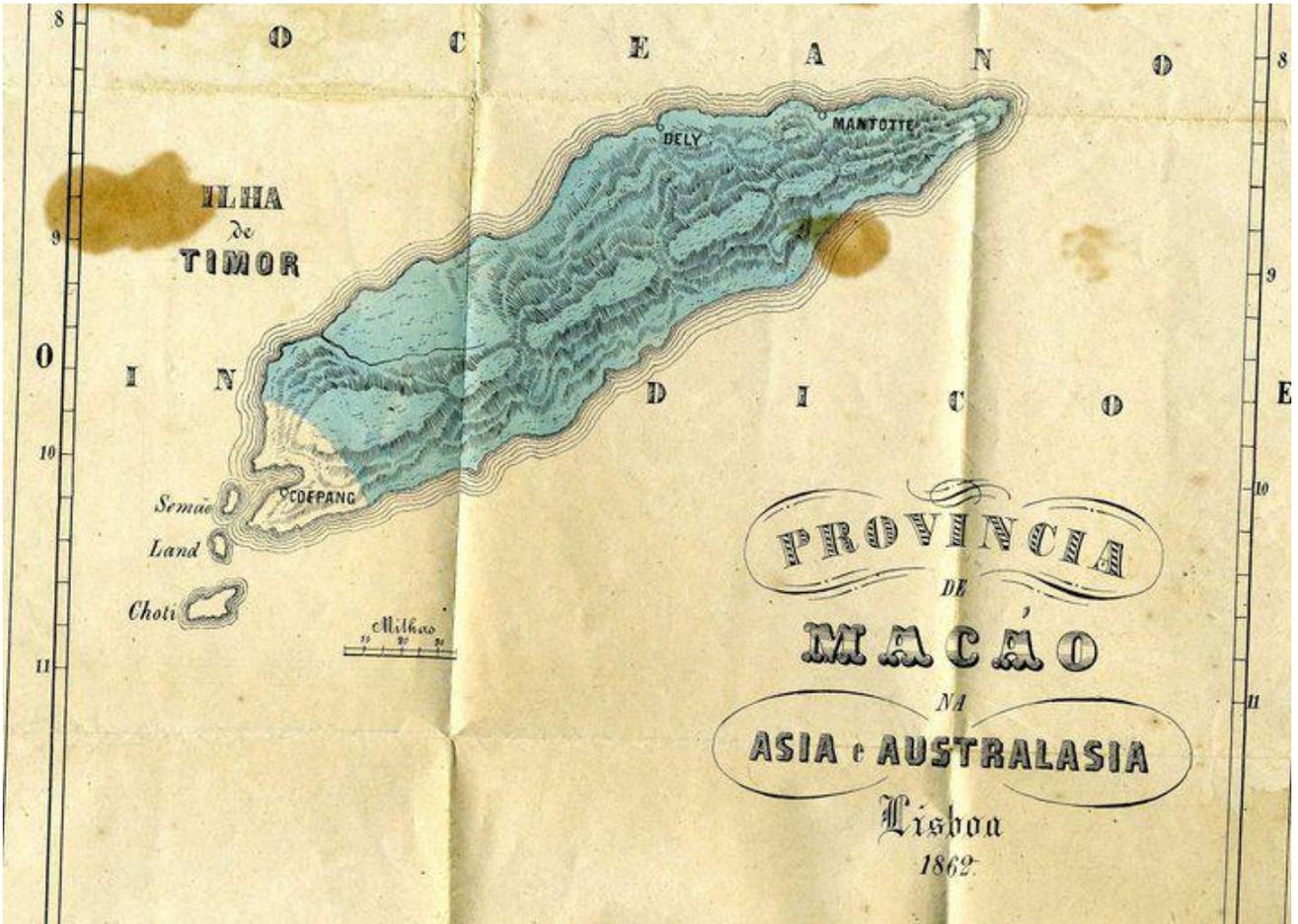
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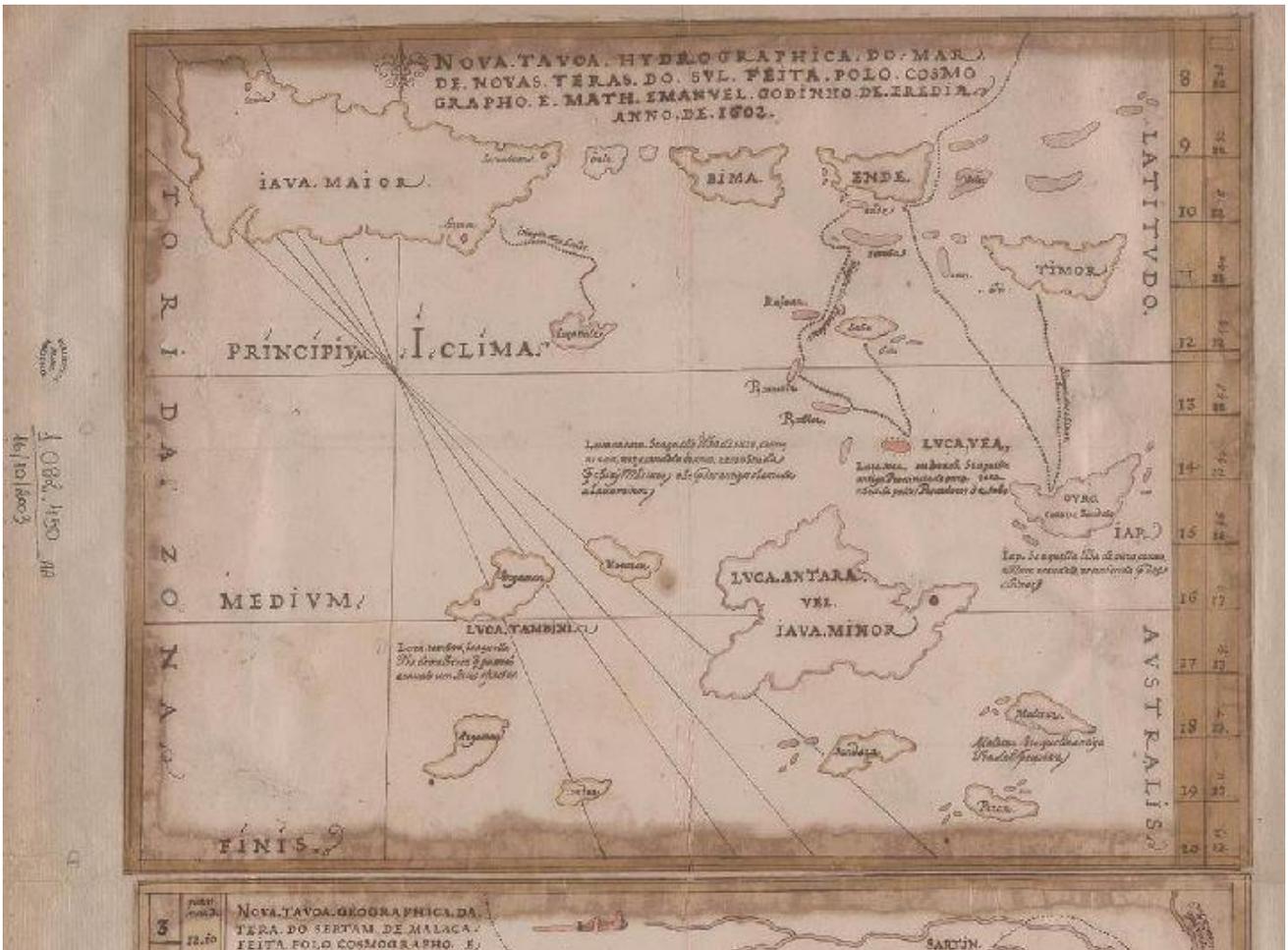
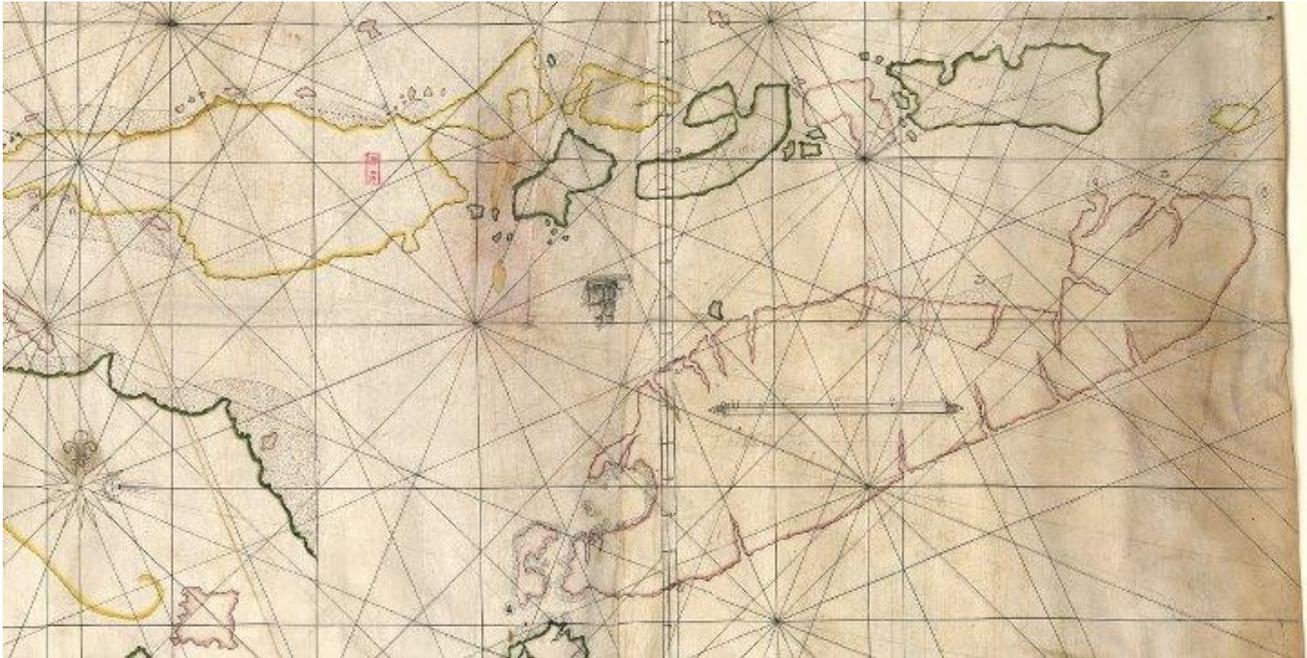


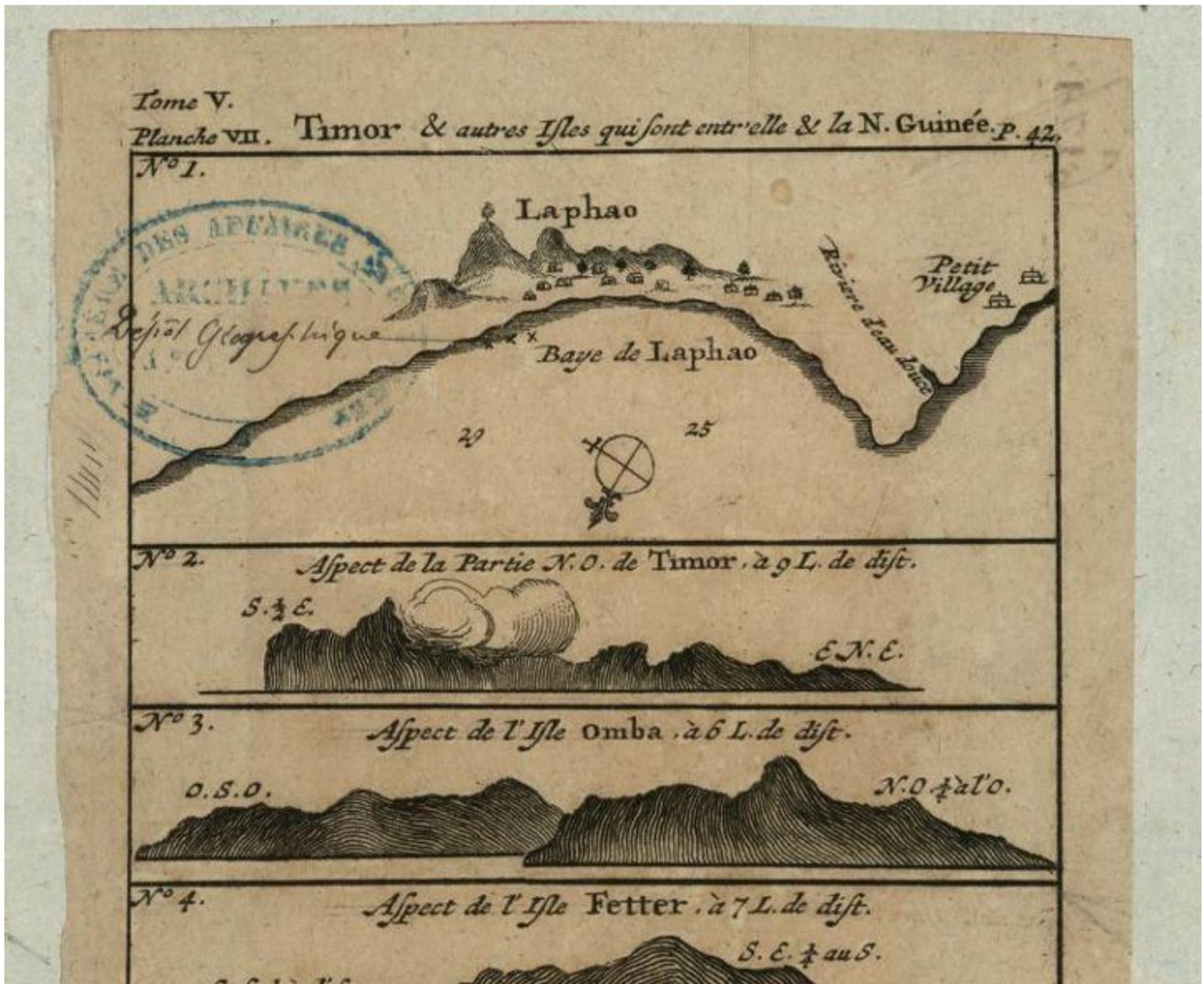








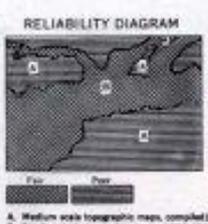






1-65 PRINTED BY ARMY MAP SERVICE, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

20 Statute Miles
32 Kilometers
Scale: 1:62,500



GRID COORDINATION		TO GIVE A STANDARD REFERENCE ON THIS SHEET TO NEAREST 100 METERS	
511		SAMPLE POINT: TACD 0210	
5000 M. SQUARE IDENTIFICATION		1. Read letters identifying 10,000 meter square in which the point lies.	
XI	YB	ZB	10
XA	YR	ZA	7
70	85		1
SOURCE: Use smaller figures of any grid number; then use for finding the full coordinates. Use ONLY the LARGE figures of the grid number.		SAMPLE REFERENCE: 1. If reporting location in U.S. or U.S.N. units, use Eastings, etc.	
5010000		502100	
		5021000	

DILI, PORTUGUESE TIMOR; INDONESIA

