

5. Networked Solidarity, International and Clandestine

This chapter describes how the clandestine movement worked inside Timor and across Indonesia. Its links to the Church and to a politics of nonviolence are then discussed. Then the chapter considers the links between the clandestine movement, the international solidarity movement and the diplomatic front to form a complex, partially integrated network.

The Clandestinos

A revealing interview was with a Timor-Leste police officer who had served in the Indonesian police (then part of the military) in the 1980s and 1990s. His job in the clandestine network was to be Xanana Gusmão's driver around Dili.¹ He could take the Commander-in-Chief to his home for a meeting with others in the clandestine network without the meeting being monitored because he was a trusted member of the Indonesian military. An error of misplaced realism discussed in Chapter 4 that many in the Indonesian security sector made was that the 1983 ceasefire, while distasteful because it appeared weak, could do more good than harm because it would allow them to photograph and locate Falintil members and their relatives. Realistically, there was no harm in leaders like Xanana Gusmão being given an opportunity to make a case for a referendum to Timorese or Indonesians, because the latter would never be persuaded to agree to it and Timorese would never win it. This of course did prove erroneous as the Indonesian cabinet was persuaded to support a referendum in 1999. More importantly, Falintil leaders used the ceasefire to recruit Timorese deep within the Indonesian state and security apparatus, such as the commander's police driver, to the clandestine network. It gave young urban Timorese such hope and inspiration to see Xanana move about safely and seemingly invincibly after all those years in the mountains. It gave their leader a network of loyal support that allowed him to live in the capital while planning the bold demonstration that became the Santa Cruz massacre (Chapter 6).

¹ In debates in which people say it was a policy mistake to recruit some of the new Timor-Leste police from the ranks of those who served in the Indonesian police it is often forgotten that many of the latter were heroes of the fight for democracy. One Australian United Nations Civilian Police (UNPOL) officer told us how his local POLRI (Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia: Indonesian National Police) commander tipped him off after the referendum result was announced in 1999: 'Tomorrow I've been told to remove your security at midday and not see what happens.' The Australian added that the local militia had a list of priority targets for assassination that he himself was on, but the POLRI commander was number one on that list.

At this point in the Timorese struggle, the years of revolutionary education in the mountains in the late 1970s when most of the population of East Timor lived under the protection of Fretilin provided a solid foundation for clandestine recruitment. Before civilians, particularly young people who had lost close relatives to Indonesian atrocities, were allowed to surrender, they were prepared for later service in the clandestine network. The 1983 ceasefire established continuity with that educative project of the young to the possibility of a long-term struggle in which they would one day prevail. During the ceasefire, Falintil leaders were able to make contact with the youth leaders they had prepared ideologically for clandestine leadership. The education that the Indonesians provided to the brightest and best of the young Timorese only assisted in their preparation for clandestine leadership. Timorese youth leaders made high schools and universities primary recruiting nodes for the clandestine network. The clandestine movement infiltrated Indonesian security and governmental organisations to gain intelligence, provided food and other supplies to Falintil, and organised demonstrations and educational and outreach activities to advance the independence struggle.

The clandestine movement had a cellular structure, with each village having a network known as *nucleos de resistencia popular*, which became known as *nurep*. *Nurep* coordinated hamlet-level networks: the *selcom* (McWilliam 2005:35). Even within the same cell, members had little knowledge of who beyond their immediate contact was in the clandestine movement, so they were not in a position to give up comrades under torture. McWilliam's (2005) research showed how traditional kin-based 'house' communities thwarted Indonesian eradication of armed and clandestine resistance. One account has the clandestine network ultimately growing to 1700 cells (Scott 2005:3). When Indonesian intelligence realised this was the case, it partially mirrored the clandestine structure, locating a *babinsa* (village guidance noncommissioned officer) in each village, with more restive villages having a 'village guidance team' and armed village guards often called *hansip* (CAVR 2006:Ch. 3.9, p. 97).

We must be careful not to essentialise the clandestine network. There were many in the clandestine movement who also assisted the Indonesian military to save themselves or hedge their bets. Some saved themselves by giving the Indonesians intelligence that was occasionally valuable, but that wilfully put them off the scent on things that were important. Other Timorese who, on balance, were pro-integration, nevertheless helped the resistance. A good example is provided by Janet Steele's (2007) work on the journalists of the newspaper *Suara Timor Timur*, which was controlled by pro-integration interests and approved by Indonesia. These journalists 'recall with pride practicing a kind of subterranean journalism that presented subtle challenges to the government's point of view' (Steele 2007:262). They had a commitment to journalistic professionalism that

led them to get facts to the people, often by educating an acquired capacity to 'read between their lines'. When they discovered facts they could not publish, for example because they came from an interview with a Falintil leader, they would regularly be sent to Reuters, AP or the BBC, so others could publish them. Sophisticated Indonesian observers could see that Timorese in many walks of life were neither black nor white, but were seeking to achieve as dark a shade of Fretilin grey as they could manage safely. Until Santa Cruz, Indonesian strategists thought they were doing well in lightening that shade of grey as increasing numbers of Timorese fell for the error of misplaced realism, seeing integration as the only pragmatic path for improving conditions and relieving the suffering of the Timorese people.

Martial arts groups with a long pedigree in Indonesia as nationalistic organisations, and a great variety of other Java-based youth groups with appeal to young women as well as young men, were seeded in East Timor. Some had strong links with and received material support from the military, others from Suharto's party, Golkar. One of the activities of such groups was to persuade citizens to get out to vote for Golkar candidates at elections in which their opponents could not win. Clandestine youth often used the resources of these youth organisations—the paper, the food and the transport—to support their resistance work. The lesson for occupying powers is that unless hearts and minds are genuinely won, the resistance will find ways of appearing to capitulate while capturing the rewards of capitulation for the resistance.

Just as Xanana Gusmão gained great legitimacy with the Catholic Church by embracing UDT members in CNRM,² distancing Falintil from communism and persuading Fretilin to step back from its claim to be the only true representative of the Timorese people, the Catholic Church was also impressed by the ceasefire as a genuine attempt to engage Indonesia in dialogue towards a peaceful settlement. When the ceasefire broke down, this meant that the Catholic Church was more committed than ever to the travails of the Timorese people and to providing cover for the clandestine movement.

The Church, Nonviolence and the Clandestine Network

The resistance 'slowly changed its strategy from armed struggle to a nonviolent struggle, discovering along the way, perhaps to its surprise, that the nonviolent

² The CAVR (2006:Ch. 3.9, p. 98) suggests that at a meeting with Xanana Gusmão in September 1982, the head of the Catholic Church in Timor, Monsignor Lopes, 'highlighted the need for national unity between Fretilin and UDT', and that Xanana indicated that he was listening to this by the national unity changes of 1983.

struggle was more effective and more powerful than the armed struggle had been' (Hallett and Summy 2000:10). One reason nonviolence was more effective was that it forged common ground with the Church. The Church in Timor was more organisationally effective than either CNRM or the Indonesian state, at least in the rural areas where most people lived. The Church had an infrastructure of land, buildings, resources from the Church internationally and from humanitarian donors and an infrastructure of leadership that had genuine legitimacy and mass civil society participation. Local church leaders witnessed a virtuous circle between their defence of common Timorese people from the human rights abuses of the military and a growth in attendance at mass and spiritual commitment to the Church as a rock to which the people could cling. In the time of Portuguese Timor, the church leadership stood above the people; during the Indonesian time, it stood with the people, and people rallied to it. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy, which required people to register their religion, also helped the Church. Many of the lapsed Catholics, agnostics and much larger numbers of animists who had never connected to Catholicism, when forced to choose, registered as Catholics, and many became committed Catholics when they saw the Church as the bulwark of sanctuary and of the survival of Timorese identity. This was reinforced by the decision that the official language of the liturgy would be Tetum. Joining the Church thus became a private gesture of resistance to perceived Muslim invaders and an affirmation of Timorese identity. In 1973, 28 per cent of the population described themselves as Catholic; in 1980, the Indonesian statistics office listed 80 per cent of the population as Catholic (CAVR 2006:Ch. 3.9, p. 99), and by independence it was 90 per cent (Wise 2006:31).

Catholic youth rallies and Youth Cross marches from village to village became venues where young people from many districts mixed together and Falintil members could join the rally or march and conduct a meeting with clandestine youth leaders as they walked for miles behind the cross. Particularly in the early years of the conflict, letters written to members of the international solidarity movement by nuns and priests inside East Timor were the principal means of getting information about Indonesian abuses to the outside world.

Indonesian security forces worried about the strengthening ties between Falintil and the Church. Hallett and Summy (2000:10) argue that this helps explain why elements of the Indonesian military, particularly Kopassus (the Special Forces), might have shifted strategy in the 1990s to arming militias 'not so much to provoke and plunder as to tempt pro-independence forces to abandon their effective nonviolent struggle for a return to the ineffective armed struggle'. This is a particularly apt analysis of the difficulties the leadership had in 1999 to persuade Falintil commanders to keep their men in cantonment while their families were being killed and homes razed by militias they easily could have

cut down in most areas. One member of the Falintil high command described cantonment as ‘an extreme humiliation for us as guerilla fighters’ (Interview, September 2009). José Ramos-Horta told this story in our September 2009 interview when we asked him what contribution he was able to make that he was particularly proud of (as recorded in our fieldnotes):

One ‘small contribution’ he was able to make in 1999 arose when Xanana called him in New York in tears, totally distraught, saying Taur Matan Ruak [the Falantil Commander] would only hold his men in cantonment for two more days. Horta said to his leader that ‘you cannot show weakness now; this is the last time for you to show weakness. Now is when we need your strongest leadership. Pull yourself together.’ Horta pulled strings with the US security sector to arrange a phone line that would get him through to Ruak. Horta said to Ruak, ‘This is the time to close ranks. I never intervene in the chain of command. But it is critical that you follow Xanana’s orders. Please don’t leave the cantonments. If we do that now, support from the international community will evaporate quickly. I will deliver the UN; we are almost there.’ Ramos-Horta then told us: ‘I was lying when I said that; we were nowhere near being there.’ Ruak had replied in Portuguese to Xanana ‘shit to the international community’ and hung up on him. The problem was that the families of the Falintil troops were being slaughtered by the militias and their homes burnt to the ground. Falintil could have cut through the militias like a knife. TMR [Taur Matan Ruak] conceded in the conversation with Horta that he must follow Xanana’s orders and hold them in cantonment.

It seems to some commentators that the Indonesian generals behaved in an irrational fashion in 1999. Yet had Falintil not been as disciplined as it was at this point, Falintil might have been drawn into what the world would have seen as a civil war, instead of the slaughter of innocents instigated by Indonesian soldiers that they in fact saw. Our analysis here is not quite that nonviolence was more effective than violence, but that nonviolent struggle to convert the enemy who were killing them, and their enemies in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia who were arming and training their killers, backed by a residual capacity to reinvigorate the insurgency that gave the clandestine youth hope, was effective. It was the shift to nonviolence without abandoning the diplomatic card of a return to armed violence that was effective. Without the option of armed escalation, the financial cost of containment would have been much less for Indonesia, the belief in the possibility of ultimate victory would have been less for the clandestine youth, and the concern of the international diplomatic community that Timor could turn disastrously embarrassing again would have been less.

The Vatican was in the grip of a similar realist analysis to that of the Governments of Australia and the United States, though it was not willing to recognise Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. This meant that the leadership of the Church in East Timor answered directly to the Vatican rather than through the Indonesian Church leadership. Nevertheless, the Vatican was focused on adverse repercussions for Catholics in the rest of Indonesia of any human rights activism and support for the resistance in East Timor. So the Vatican discouraged such advocacy. Under Indonesian pressure, it ultimately forced the resignation of Monsignor Lopes, who had been meeting with and encouraging the resistance rather too much for Jakarta's liking (Lennox 2000). The replacement was Bishop Belo. When Pope John Paul II visited in 1989, both Indonesia and the resistance were able to interpret it as a vindication of the legitimacy of their position in East Timor. Yet it was obviously a deeply moving experience for the 100 000 Timorese who attended the Pope's main mass to have their suffering acknowledged by the Pontiff. And it was an embarrassment for Indonesian authorities that young people at the mass unfurled banners and raised chants for independence and human rights when given this opportunity for the international media to notice. The brutal response of the Indonesian military to the demonstration was recorded by the foreign media and witnessed by the Pope and his entourage.

Students, Youth and the Clandestine Network

While an estimated 13 000 Timorese men and women were killed fighting with Falintil and more than 20 000 others suffered great hardship in doing so (Scott 2005:3), most who lost their lives were civilians—many killed on suspicion of being part of the solidarity movement. The clandestine student movement Renetil (Resistencia Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste: Timor-Leste Students' National Resistance) was formed in Bali in 1988. Adérito Soares was a member. Renetil operated among Timorese university students in Java as well. Students in the clandestine movement also infiltrated the government-approved student association in which membership was compulsory for Timorese students, Impettu (the East Timorese Students and Youth Association), and ultimately came to control it. Meeting was a problem—always something that could attract surveillance from the security forces—so a good way for clandestine students to meet was under the auspices of Impettu, whose activities were approved by the regime. Through Impettu, Renetil used to organise an annual Christmas party. This was formally supported by the head of the military in each region who would offer some financial assistance to Impettu to host the party. Prior to the party, Impettu invited Timorese students from around Indonesia to attend. So, every Christmas, Impettu was able to bring together between 300 and 400 East Timorese students from all over Java and Bali. Prior to the Christmas party,

Impettu also organised a soccer competition that ran over four or five days. At the Christmas party, Impettu would invite the regional military commander to give a speech. The military commander looked on this as an event at which he could supervise the students. For the students themselves, however, this formal gathering, which had the blessing of the military, was a great opportunity for the clandestine network from Bali and Java to coordinate activities such as the embassy fence-jumping discussed below, underground activities and contact with Falintil.

The philosophy of the student resistance in Java and Bali was Gandhian: to use nonviolence, risky demonstrations and courageous sacrifice with the ultimate objective of persuading Indonesians to support their cause. This they did, particularly in the form of Indonesian students who were part of a democracy movement committed to bringing down Suharto. Timorese students supported the Indonesian democracy movement in its clandestine activities and in pro-democracy and human rights demonstrations where Fretilin flags would often be seen in the crowd. In turn, Indonesian students supported them. The two social movements persuaded each other that they were struggling against the same root cause of a diverse set of problems that included injustice for East Timor. That root cause was the Suharto New Order regime. The clandestine network had forged links with Indonesian human rights activists from the early 1980s when Timorese political prisoners began to be sent to Java in large numbers. The prisons became networking sites between the two resistance movements. The Timorese resistance leadership believed that a likely path to independence for East Timor lay in an Indonesian democracy movement with a student vanguard destabilising the Suharto regime and replacing it with a democratic regime that would respect the human rights of the Timorese people. Winning the trust and respect of the Indonesian democracy movement in this way being such a key objective, the leadership absolutely forbade and prevented the formation of terrorist cells that might harm the people of Java. 'Ramos-Horta quickly showed the door to terrorist groups offering to take hostages and plant bombs. I saw him do it once in New York' (Scott 2005:5). Renetil came to call its strategy 'Indonesianisation' of the conflict. In this context, Xanana Gusmão described war as 'the art of living side by side with the enemy' (McLeod 2008). Indonesian pro-democracy activist Coki Nai Pos Pos, who spent time in prison with Xanana, said: 'The Indonesian pro-democracy movement used the East Timorese international contacts and exposure to advance their agenda and the East Timorese used us to influence domestic politics' (McLeod 2008:4).

In the mid-1990s, the Timorese students in Jakarta invented a new strategy to attract international attention through nonviolence. This was mass fence jumping into embassies to seek asylum (see Fernandes 2011:130–6; Sword Gusmão 2003:56–66). The most publicised Renetil fence-jump occurred into

the US Embassy at the time of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting of 1994 when the international media was assembled in Jakarta. The students achieved front-page attention around the world for days as 29 of them sat in the embassy demanding an audience with President Clinton. They did not win that, but they were shunted off to asylum in Portugal to get them out of the way, only to generate more publicity there. While embassy security tightened after this, there were a dozen subsequent successful mass fence-jumps in 1995 and 1996 into the embassies of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Russia and France. There were also six attempts that were foiled; these included some with more than 50 students attempting to jump embassy fences (Singh 1996:364).

Many young people of the clandestine movement sacrificed their lives, not only at Santa Cruz as we discuss in the next chapter, but mostly quietly, not returning one day, never returning to the embrace of their families. Larger numbers sacrificed their university studies, seeing university enrolment in Indonesia as an opportunity to dedicate themselves to liberation for their country rather than to advancement of their careers.

The International Solidarity Movement

The international solidarity movement was a small number of people in a tiny number of nations who played a critical role in connecting the sacrifices of the clandestine movement to wider audiences. For international solidarity movements to work, it is not necessary for all concerned people to contribute to all struggles against oppression, just for some of them to contribute to one. Many of the dedicated people of the solidarity movement were inspired by José Ramos-Horta's charisma, charm, hope, vision and tenacity.

One delightful story of how individuals in the solidarity movement enrolled the most implausible of allies to help to get the story of Timor's suffering out is told by one of its members, David Scott:

Rupert Murdoch had been a friend in the 1950s and '60s through the marriage of his sister, Helen, to my close friend, Geoffrey Handbury. In early January 1976 I called at his Fifth Avenue office...he bounded out of his office and greeted me warmly. 'Come in and meet some of the boys', he said. With a big grin he introduced me to his colleagues: 'Meet my friend from Australia', he said, 'who's here trying to establish a communist base north of Darwin.' Despite the edge of the bonhomie, Rupert arranged for *The Australian* correspondent in New York to send

an article by me for publication in *The Australian*. And when I went to Washington later, he gave me an introduction to the editor of *The Washington Post*. (Scott 2005:52–3)

The most amazing story of how the solidarity movement lit up with imaginative activism after the Santa Cruz massacre involves four women from Ploughshares for Peace who slipped into British Aerospace premises and used hammers to disarm a British Hawk jet fighter headed for delivery to Indonesia. The Hawks had been used to terrifying effect against the villagers of East Timor. What was most remarkable was that a jury in Liverpool acquitted them, finding that they had acted to prevent the greater crime of genocide (CAVR 2006:Ch. 7.1, p. 111; for a firsthand account, see Zelter 2004).



Figure 5.1: The Ploughshares for Peace Four at a reunion

Photo: Pat Gaffney/Pax Christi

Another imaginative, information-age strategy was the Portuguese Hackers Against Indonesia. They dispersed propaganda across the Indonesian military's web site and the web site of its Department of Foreign Affairs. In August 1998, 45 Indonesian domains were hacked by Timor solidarity supporters. José Ramos-Horta threatened to more seriously unleash this new form of warfare—a 'desperate and ferocious' campaign of Internet sabotage of the Indonesian economy—if it refused to respect the outcome of the August 1999 referendum (CAVR 2006:Ch. 7.1, p. 112).

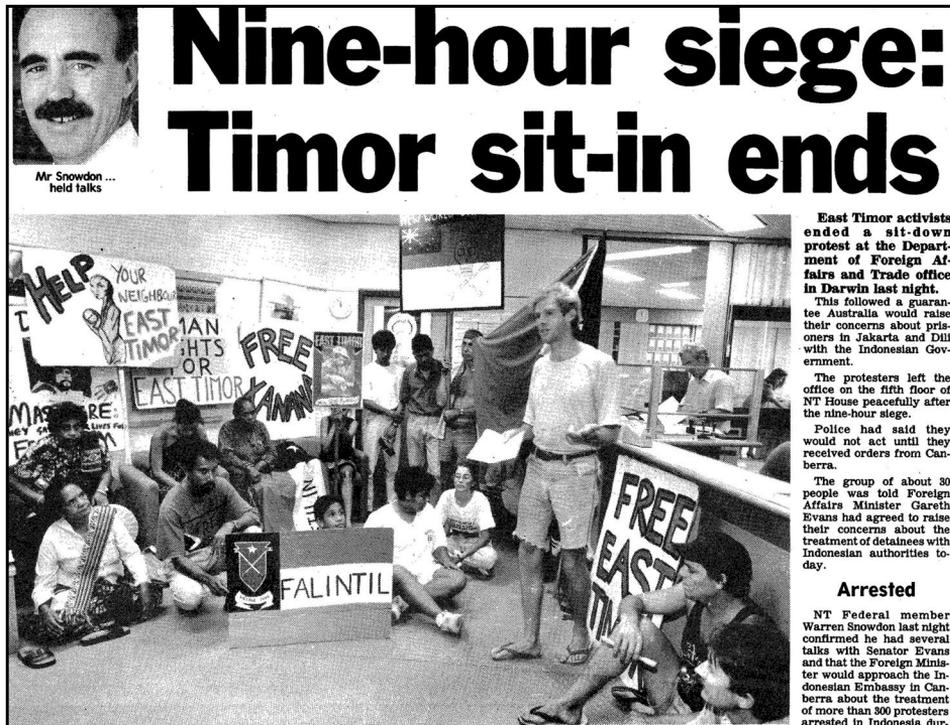


Figure 5.2: Members of the international solidarity movement occupy an office of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1994

Photo: *Northern Territory News*, with thanks to Jude Conway

While the most critical work of the international solidarity movement was done by a small number of dedicated individuals, support from the resources of certain NGOs was also important. Included among these in Australia was the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), now the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), particularly its Human Rights Office led by Pat Walsh, Community Aid Abroad (now, Oxfam Australia), Action for World Development, the Australian Parliamentary East Timor Friendship Group, Australian Catholic Relief and other Catholic Church networks. In Australia, Darwin, Sydney and Melbourne were the nodes and spiritual heartlands of the pro-Timor lobby, just as Canberra was of the pro-Indonesia lobby. The East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign was important, as were East Timor support groups in many other European countries, East Timor Alert Network in Canada, the Catholic Institute for International Relations and the East Timor Action Network (ETAN) in the United States. ETAN, working with Ramos-Horta, built up a network of pro-Timor senators and representatives with influential members like Ted Kennedy, Tom Daschle, Richard Gephardt and Nancy Pelosi. ETAN led a successful grassroots campaign to block the transfer of US F-5 fighter aircraft to Indonesia and also successfully campaigned in

Congress against small arms sales to the regime (Simpson 2004:460–1). Such campaigns were also vigorous in European countries that supplied military equipment to Indonesia, including Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom, where TAPOL (which means political prisoner in Indonesian) became a vital advocacy group. Japanese and British politicians led the formation of the critical international network Parliamentarians for East Timor (Budiardjo 2002:2). The solidarity movement was particularly strong in Portugal (Fernandes 2011:76–8). The International Federation for East Timor was founded to coordinate the campaigns of the solidarity movement which by 1995 spread across more than 20 countries, especially coordination at the United Nations and international forums (Simpson 2004:461). In turn, it spawned regional coordination bodies such as the Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor.



Figure 5.3: Antonia Maia meets his old friend Paddy Kenneally, an Australian Timor veteran of World War II

Photo: Ross Bird

The solidarity movement was not unified politically and was riven with jealousies and political factionalism. Some members were communist; others were fervently anti-communist. These differences, however, did not prevent Ramos-Horta, Alkatiri and others using them as vehicles to publicise the suffering of East Timor around the globe. The foregoing discussion might mislead readers to think that the international solidarity movement was a transnational advocacy movement in the Western sense that term is often used: organised around groups initiated in the West. In fact, the initial inspiration was African. As the name suggests, Fretilin started as a revolutionary liberation

front modelled on FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique: Liberation Front of Mozambique) in Mozambique, and later supported under FRELIMO's wing in Maputo. From its foundation in 1962, FRELIMO fought both militarily and through international networks in churches, trade unions and human rights groups tasked to isolate Portugal, having it expelled from certain international organisations and creating obstacles to ultimate accession to the European Union (Webster 2003:4–5).

The Diplomatic Front

The East Timor solidarity movement was resisted by a much larger, better-placed network of influence, often described as the Indonesia lobby in its Australian incarnation (discussed in Chapter 3). Like the solidarity movement, the pro-Indonesia network was far from ideologically unified, including folk from the right and the left of the Western political spectrum. The belief that warm diplomatic and scholarly exchange with Indonesia should have more prominence unified it. In the Australian context, the idea was that Australian diplomacy and scholarship were far too oriented to other Western nations and insufficiently to the largest Muslim population of any nation in the world. Most members of the Indonesia network between 1975 and 1999 who met at events like the annual Indonesia Update organised by our own school at The Australian National University (now the College of Asia and the Pacific) tended to see the East Timor solidarity movement as irresponsible. The two key nodes of the Australian pro-Indonesia network were in Canberra at the Department of Foreign Affairs (its most important player being Richard Woolcott, former head of that department and former Ambassador to Indonesia) and our former school at The Australian National University (its most senior players being the distinguished political scientist Jamie Mackie and the renowned economist Heinz Arndt). This group of scholars and diplomats included most of the big guns of their professions who specialised in Indonesian affairs. And throughout the 1970s, 1980s and most of the 1990s, they utterly outgunned the mostly more marginal intellectuals who were active in the East Timor solidarity movement. Political leaders of both major political parties in Australia liked the hard-headed political pragmatism of the pro-Indonesia network—well captured by this interview on ABC TV's *Lateline* on 22 March 1994:

Professor Jamie Mackie (ANU): [I]t's certainly been a tragic and disastrous story. But I think if we were to put East Timor at the top of the agenda and say: 'This is what determines our policy towards the region', we're going to pay a very, very high price. I think we'd be antagonizing countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and, by extension, the rest of ASEAN on issues that matter much—perhaps I shouldn't say much more, but

matter a greater deal, at the moment, like APEC. And with Indonesia chairing the APEC summit later this year, I don't think this is a sensible time to say: 'Let's go out on a limb and pick a fight with Indonesia.'

Margot O'Neill: Is there ever a sensible time?

Jamie Mackie: Probably, not, no. (Aditjondro 1994:54)

It is doubtless hard for readers outside Canberra to understand how anyone could think APEC mattered more than tens of thousands of Timorese deaths. Australia is not a member of the potent regional organisation ASEAN, and suffers a middle-power insecurity syndrome that it cannot wield influence through a regional grouping like the European Union, as most other Western middle powers can. So Australian leaders lobbied in the 1980s and 1990s for APEC. In the late 2000s, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd lobbied (bringing Richard Woolcott out of retirement for the campaign) unsuccessfully for a new Asia Pacific Community. While APEC is not seen outside Canberra policy circles as having made a large contribution to humankind, the very APEC meeting in Jakarta referred to here became at that point the most important occasion since Santa Cruz when the Timor students' movement was able to shine the international spotlight on their country's plight.

Just as it was not necessary for Falintil to be winning more battles than the Indonesian military, so it was not a requirement for ultimate victory that the international Timor lobby was winning more debates than the pro-Indonesia network. In both cases, their job was to be a severe irritant to incumbents of power in Indonesia and their allies who would not go away until major concessions were yielded. Ultimately, the hope was that a moment of political vulnerability, crisis or regime change would come that would bring the enemy to the table for genuine negotiations. The contribution of the international solidarity movement and the clandestine network was to help make Suharto and his military unpopular nationally and internationally, to impose a cost on the good opinion the most outspoken supporters of Indonesia enjoyed within their own parties and their own countries, to win dissenters to military support for Indonesia, particularly in the US Congress, and to win new supporters of Timor in the United Nations. It was to allow the suffering and the injustice inflicted on the people of Timor to be remembered. It was to insinuate doubt into the Realpolitik of seeing the injustice as irreversible.

It was only after the Santa Cruz massacre that the solidarity movement began to be successful in these modest terms. In the late 1970s and 1980s, virtually no-one picked up most of their press releases. Constância Pinto and Matthew Jardine (1997:23) use the example of East Timor coverage in the *Los Angeles Times*. It ran 16 stories on East Timor in the five months between August

1975 and the invasion, but none between March 1976 and November 1979—the period when the worst slaughter was occurring in East Timor. John Pilger (1994:316) recorded:

[The] *Australian* sent its Jakarta correspondent, Patrick Walters, on the first shepherded press tour of Dili, accompanied by Indonesian officials. Walters produced a memorable series of disgraceful pieces. Jakarta's 'economic achievements' in East Timor were 'impressive', he wrote, giving official statistics of Jakarta's generous 'development' of the territory. As for resistance, it was 'leaderless' and beaten. Indeed, you wondered what the fuss was all about as 'no one was now arrested without proper legal procedures'. 'The situation regarding human rights', the puppet governor told him, 'is very good at the moment'. (Pilger 1994:316)

Pilger managed to do something himself about breaking through Timor denial by secretly filming inside Timor on the pretext of being a travel agent preparing a tourism promotion. His documentary *Death of a Nation* was widely screened in 1993.

Such efforts were important support for José Ramos-Horta's leadership of what Xanana Gusmão saw as the third front after Falintil and the clandestine front: the diplomatic front. After Santa Cruz gave him a serious platform for international engagement, and even more so after friends in the solidarity movement successfully lobbied for the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and Bishop Belo in 1996, Ramos-Horta was able to attract some interest in a peace plan. It was called the Timor Talks Campaign, which Indonesia dismissed. It was for a three-phase process. In the first phase there would be two years of dialogue between East Timor, Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the United Nations to implement a variety of confidence-building measures, which would include a drastic reduction in Indonesian troops in East Timor and a UN presence. The second phase involved political autonomy under Indonesia and a democratically elected People's Assembly. It would last five to 10 years. Then there would be the third period of a referendum and final transition to a permanent settlement of sovereignty over East Timor.

This kind of talk became vaguely credible in the 1990s in a way it could never have been in the 1980s, because no-one could imagine democratic transformation in Indonesia in the 1980s, whereas in the 1990s cracks were appearing in Suharto's hold on power. So we must go back further to comprehend Ramos-Horta's resilience during his lonely years. Between 1976 and 1984, he was banned from entering Australia for fear this would displease Suharto, and diplomatic doors he sought to enter were slammed in his face all around the world. In the early years, he moved between Mozambique, which was willing to issue visas to the members of the Fretilin Central Committee in exile, and New York.

In New York, Ramos-Horta worked as a UN lobbyist by day and cleaner by night. A critical first objective he secured in early 1976 was to persuade the Secretary-General of the United Nations to keep the door open for dialogue between Indonesia and Portugal over East Timor, though the dialogue itself did not happen until much later. A string of diplomatic successes followed at the United Nations—some close run. Ten General Assembly and Security Council resolutions between 1975 and 1982 taken together ‘criticised Indonesia’s invasion of the territory, called for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops, and affirmed the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination’ (Jardine 2000). Indonesia was reportedly surprised and angered by these UN statements. These resolutions were an important part of laying a foundation for support from international civil society for Indonesian withdrawal. They were steps towards President Habibie ultimately wanting to rid his country of the Timor problem once and for all. Matthew Jardine (2000) argued, however, that independence finally came to East Timor in spite of the United Nations rather than because of it. He observes accurately enough that action flows from UN resolutions only when its most powerful members want it to. In this case, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, was undiplomatic enough to say ‘[t]he Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook [on East Timor]. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with not inconsiderable success’ (Moynihan with Weaver 1978:247).



Figure 5.4: José Ramos-Horta waves photographs of suffering children at a UN hearing, 1982

Communist countries were mostly the ones giving Ramos-Horta limited diplomatic support and resources in the early years. The Communist Party in Australia also lent the vital support of operating a radio and transceiver in Darwin that could communicate with the Fretilin leadership in the mountains of Timor. In the early years of the conflict, doors were mostly closed to Fretilin in Moscow and therefore mostly in Havana. After 1999, Fidel Castro sent large numbers of Cuban doctors to help rebuild the Timor-Leste health system, telling the Fretilin leadership that he felt remorse that he did not help them more during their greatest years of struggle. Because the Soviets were so supportive of Indonesia, China gave considerable rhetorical support and some practical diplomatic assistance to Ramos-Horta in the corridors of the United Nations. As China changed towards becoming the free-market giant of Asia in the 1980s, its relationship with the large Indonesian market became important, and China became more timid in relation to East Timor.

Before the Cold War had ended, Fretilin had shed almost all of its Marxist–Leninist influences and leaders. With the end of the Cold War, Ramos-Horta was prioritising Western support. An international solidarity movement rallied around him in Australia and the United States because of the shame many felt at their countries’ complicity in the invasion and subsequent support for the Indonesian slaughter of Timorese civilians.

The feeling of responsibility gradually became even more profound in Portugal—sharply so after Santa Cruz. Portugal worked with the European Union to keep dialogue towards a peace process for East Timor open on the UN agenda. Portugal took Australia to the International Court of Justice in 1991 in an (unsuccessful) attempt to strike down its Timor Gap Treaty to allow exploitation of oil and gas resources in the sea between Australia and Timor. Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor in 1979 so that it could cut its oil deal. One of Portugal’s and Ramos-Horta’s accomplishments at the United Nations had been to keep Portuguese Timor on the list of non–self-governing territories, with Portugal recognised as the legal administering power.

Portugal, like Australia, was home to many Timorese refugees. Ultimately, it became a base from which support grew not only across the European Union, but also across the Portuguese-speaking diaspora. All parties in the Brazilian Parliament came to contribute to the Sao Paulo Parliamentary Front for East Timor’s Independence (Wise 2006:32). Beginning with the votes at the United Nations between 1975 and 1982, Ramos-Horta became adept at calling forth fellow feeling from Mozambique and Angola. These former Portuguese colonies were particularly important in getting African support for East Timor. Mari Alkatiri and Roqué Rodriques led the work of building support in Africa itself.

Kofi Annan's tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1997 saw an upgrading of East Timor dialogue on the UN agenda, with Ambassador Jamsheed Marker of Pakistan appointed as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative on East Timor. There were dozens of tripartite meetings involving Portugal, Indonesia and the United Nations between 1976 and 1999. There were also many of these meetings or other gatherings convened by Indonesia alone that East Timor representatives attended. Neither Ramos-Horta nor any of the other recognised leaders of the East Timor resistance attended in this capacity, usually because neither they nor the Indonesians wanted them to be there (Alatas 2006). While peace options such as autonomy within Indonesia were often discussed in these meetings, and while they sometimes included gestures at reconciliation between former Fretilin and UDT leaders, they were not genuine peace talks that included legitimate representatives of the insurgency or of the government deposed by the 1975 invasion. The 1975–99 conflict between East Timor and Indonesia is unusual for Peacebuilding Compared in that we have coded the number of peace talks between the warring parties as just one: the 1983 ceasefire talks. Of course, this is somewhat misleading because there was shuttle diplomacy of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative on East Timor between the Indonesian and resistance leadership, because of peacemaking elements in so many of the tripartite Portugal–Indonesia–United Nations meetings mentioned above, and because of many informal meetings between the imprisoned Xanana Gusmão and Indonesian leaders. Even so, the ultimate peace was not one forged by negotiations.

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