

Forum: Historical Security Council 1975

Issue: The Question of East Timor

Student Officer: Joonas Jokiniemi

Position: Assistant President of the Historical Security Council

Introduction

East Timor was part of the Portuguese empire from the 16th century to the second world war, in which Japan annexed it. Unlike many other countries, East Timor did not gain independence after the war but was returned to their colonial overlords. Due to a coup in Portugal in 1974, which resulted in a new anti-colonial government, the colonies of Portugal began to declare themselves independent. This included East Timor, which declared independence on the 28th of November 1975. Before the declaration, East Timor faced a brief civil war, which established the power structures between the country's parties.

After the declaration of independence, the main opposition party signed a declaration calling for the annexation of East Timor into Indonesia. Indonesia took the declaration as a justification to annex the country, which resulted in an Indonesian invasion of East Timor. East Timor was not able to mount a significant resistance to the Indonesian army and East Timor was annexed as a province of Indonesia. The Indonesian rule included harsh suppression of the independence movement in East Timor.

The country of East Timor has suffered greatly under different colonial overlords from the 16th to the 20th century. The struggle for independence has been a part of East Timor's national identity until its independence in 2002.

Definition of Key Terms

Coup d'etat¹

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/coup-detat> accessed 4.12.2022

A coup d'état or just a coup is an overthrow of the government by a small group of people. A coup d'état does not include a large portion of the population, but a small group of the nation's elite, merely changing the people in the country's ruling positions.

Independence^{2 3 4}

Having political power and self-governance over the territories you hold. In a state of independence, no other government should have greater political power over your territory, than your own government. The greatest political power is with the one capable of making decisions and laws over the territory.

Self-determination^{5 6}

The process of people of a state choosing their own government and political status. For example, the possibility of East Timor's nationals choosing their own president or choosing if the nation is an independent state or an autonomous province.

Invasion⁷

Entering or taking control of a nation by force or by using an army. The goal of an invasion is usually to establish a power presence in another country, which can be used to influence the nation's political situation or to transfer the nation's territories to yourself.

Annexation^{8 9}

Annexation is a unilateral act of proclaiming control over a nation's legal borders. Unlike cession, annexation is done through force, which is asserted politically or through military presence. In an annexation, the occupying force unilaterally proclaims ownership over the territories, giving the other party no say in the topic.

Decolonization¹⁰

² https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/independence accessed 4.12.2022

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence> accessed 4.12.2022

⁴ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/independence> accessed 4.12.2022

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-determination> accessed 5.12.2022

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/self-determination> accessed 5.12.2022

⁷ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/invasion> accessed 5.12.2022

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/annexation> accessed 5.12.2022

⁹ <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/09/30/what-is-annexation> accessed 5.12.2022

¹⁰ queensu.ca/ctl/resources/decolonizing-and-indigenizing/what-decolonization-what-indigenization accessed 5.12.2022

Decolonization is the process of removing colonial elements from a nation and a society. Usually, the most important part of decolonization is granting the highest political powers over a territory, and granting formal independence. Decolonization happens mostly in countries formerly occupied by a great colonial empire, such as the British, French, Dutch, Spanish or Portuguese empires.

UDT¹¹

UDT or the Timor democratic union is a conservative party in East Timor. In the 1970s UDT's main political agenda was to move East Timor slowly to independence, by first making the nation autonomous and then independent. UDT fought a civil war against Fretilin.

Fretilin¹²

Fretilin or Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor is a political party in East Timor. Fretilin's main agenda was in the 1970s to make East Timor fully independent. In the 70s East Timor had three main political parties and Fretilin was the pro-independence party.

Explanation of the Question

East Timor had mainly been under the control of Portugal since 1702, being first a colony and later a province, of Portugal. This all changed quite rapidly after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal¹³(25. April.1974). In the Carnation Revolution, the military of Portugal took down the authoritarian leader, who had ruled the country since 1968. One of the main policies of the new military junta, which came before democracy in the nation, was to tear down the Portuguese colonial empire. The coup worked bloodlessly and the new junta started to pull Portugal's troops away from the colonies.

In many of Portugal's colonies, there had been shifting towards independence already, but in East Timor, it largely started after Portugal left the nation. After the revolution, the Portuguese junta made a plan for transitional administration of East Timor from limited self-governing to full independence.¹⁴ At the beginning of East Timor's independence, there were three parties UDT, Fretilin and Apodeti. In the beginning, UDT was in favour of following

¹¹ <http://www.ci.uc.pt/timor/parties.html> accessed 6.12.2022

¹² <https://irp.fas.org/world/para/timor.htm> accessed 6.12.2022

¹³ historyextra.com/period/20th-century/carnation-revolution-guide-facts-coup-portugal-estado-novo-regime/ accessed 6.12.2022

¹⁴ https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Framing%20the%20State/Chapter9_Framing.pdf accessed 6.12.2022

Portugal's plans for moving slowly towards independence. Fretilin supported a quicker transition towards independence than UDT and its policies were broadly more leftist and liberal than UDT's. Apodeti's policies differ heavily from UDT and Fretilin, as it supported joining Indonesia rather than independence.

In the beginning, UDT and Fretilin made a coalition government with plans to move the nation gradually towards independence. This ended in 1975, when Indonesia gave UDT the false information, that Fretilin was planning a communist coup against UDT, and UDT should react before it was too late. UDT reacted by starting a civil war against Fretilin, which quite rapidly lead to chasing UDT troops out of the nation and to Indonesian west Timor. After the end of the civil war, Indonesia began border clashes with East Timor trying to provoke a military escalation. East Timor didn't react militarily, but diplomatically by declaring the nation independent.¹⁵

After the declaration of independence UDT signed a pact with Indonesia calling for the annexation of East Timor into Indonesia as a province. Indonesia took this as a justification for war and started moving troops to East Timor claiming that they were protecting East Timor from turning to communism, with the claim that Fretilin was secretly a communist party. Indonesia invaded East Timor quickly and declared East Timor a province of Indonesia. This resulted in a long and bloody occupation from 1975 to 1999 killing over 100 000 East Timorese people.¹⁶

East Timor did not achieve independence in 1975 as it was planned out but was annexed into Indonesia, with most East Timorese being staunchly against the situation. The annexation was not made possible only by the military attack against East Timor, but also by the political pressuring and hybrid tactics used by Indonesia. Indonesia was not only able to use its troops to invade the nation, but before that, they were able to create political division in it. Before the attack, Indonesia made the second largest party of the nation they were invading support the invasion, which was one of the most important factors in making the attack possible. Indonesia was able to use the unstable political situation to its advantage and to gain more territories to itself. This difficult period of the Nation's history has significantly affected East Timor's economy, politics and life of ordinary people in a highly negative way.

The early history of East Timor

¹⁵ <https://constitutionnet.org/country/constitutional-history-timor-leste> accessed 6.12.2022

¹⁶ <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/updateFiles/english/CONFLICT-RELATED%20DEATHS.pdf> accessed 6.12.2022

In the pre-colonial history of East Timor, it's important to remember the historical events, that led to East Timor becoming culturally and linguistically so diverse. The basis for which the ethnicity of East Timorese is largely built upon consists of three main migration waves, in the early history of the area.

The first wave came about 40 000 years ago, these people were the first settlers and they are known as Astraloids. Astraloids migrated to East Timor by sea, which meant that they had advanced knowledge of the seas, because of which a high number of their food supply came from fish.¹⁷ Then roughly in 3000 BCE came the Malaysians, who populated areas of the main island and the pacific islands of East Timor.¹⁸ The wave of new settlers led to the Australoids moving to the country's mountainous interior, where they rarely mixed with the newer settlers.¹⁹ The last great migration wave came roughly 2500 BCE when the Proto-Malays people came from South China and Northern Indonesia.

After the waves of migration, it's thought that the Malaysians and the proto-Malaysians mixed creating the most common genetic background for East Timorese. During and after the three mass immigrations East Timor transformed from a land of hunter-gatherers to a state of limited agriculture and trade. It's known that the nation consisted of chiefdoms and principedoms with distinguished languages and limited trade of sandalwood, honey, wax and slaves, with Indonesians and Chinese.²⁰ The existence of these three mass immigrations is most likely the reason for the nation's unique language structure and its unique aboriginal culture. It's thought that these differences are one of the key reasons for the impossibility of unification with Indonesia.²¹

The colonial history of East Timor

The first time colonial settlers arrived on the coast of Timor was in 1515 in the enclave of Oecussi.²² In 1566 Portuguese settlers made their way into the nearby island of Solor, where they made their first establishment. From there they took trips to East Timor trading

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web.archive.org/web/20130515133750/http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/11/2011/evidence-of-42000-year-old-deep-sea-fishing-revealed accessed 7.12.2022

¹⁸ https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/East_Timor#History accessed 7.12.2022

¹⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20081029065300/http://www.timor-leste.gov.tl/AboutTimorleste/history.htm> accessed 7

²⁰ <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/EastTimor/precolonial.htm> accessed 9.12.2022

²¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/19990202035244/http://www.uc.pt/Timor/CURSO1A.HTM> accessed 9.12.2022

²² <https://web.archive.org/web/20081029065300/http://www.timor-leste.gov.tl/AboutTimorleste/history.htm> accessed 9.12.2022

sandalwood. At this time Portugal's relations with East Timor were purely based on trade and there was not yet any colonial oppression of the island's aboriginal people.²³ In the war with the Netherlands, from 1602 to 1663 Portugal lost a lot of influence in the area, losing Sular in 1613 and Kupang in 1653.²⁴ At the same time the Netherlands were gaining new territories in the Dutch East Indies (also known as Indonesia). This shift moved the balance of power in the area heavily towards the Dutch.²⁵ In 1642 the Portuguese began converting Timorese to catholicism, with the aim of transforming the locals into a more 'civilized' religion, and making the local tribal leaders less powerful.²⁶ At the same time the Portuguese took the power from the local leaders and used the power the leaders had through pacts, to Portugal's own advantage.²⁷

In 1702 Portugal made East Timor a colony, with the name of Portuguese Timor. In the beginning, Portugal's control over the island was vacillating, and Portugal had very little control over the indigenous people, especially in the colony's mountainous interior. In 1769 Portugal decided to move the capital from Lifau to Dili, realising that they had no way of controlling the whole island from a town far away from the population centres.²⁸ Portugal's control over the island and the border with the Netherlands was still not fixed, largely due to East Timor being a colony of less value, and the nearest colony being Macau, with Portugal only having one seaway there. On the 20th of April 1859, Portugal and the Netherlands signed the treaty of Lisbon, laying the border between the two countries of the island.²⁹ In 1844 Timor and Macau were removed from the district of the Portuguese Indian trading post-Goa. In 1850, Portuguese Timor was removed from the legal control of the jurisdiction of Macau, before being returned to the legal rule of Goa in 1856. In 1863, Dili was declared a city and the capital of the semi-autonomous region of East Timor. In 1866 the territory was again put under the jurisdiction of Macau. It took until 1909 that Portuguese Timor was made a full province.³⁰ Portugal signed three further treaties with the Dutch in 1851, 1854, and 1859 establishing the borders that stood until 1913 when the agreement of the island's final split was signed, which stands as the border to this day.

²³ <https://newint.org/features/1994/03/05/simply> accessed 10.12.2022

²⁴ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-009-8846-0_6 accessed 10.12.2022

²⁵ <https://newint.org/features/1994/03/05/simply> accessed 10.12.2022

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_East_Timor#Pre-colonial_history accessed 10.12.2022

²⁷ <https://www.timorleste.tl/east-timor/about/history/> accessed 10.12.2022

²⁸ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-009-8846-0_6 accessed 10.12.2022

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[jusmundi.com/en/document/decision/en-boundaries-in-the-island-of-timor-the-netherlands-v-portugal-award-thursday-25th-june-1914](https://www.jusmundi.com/en/document/decision/en-boundaries-in-the-island-of-timor-the-netherlands-v-portugal-award-thursday-25th-june-1914) accessed 10.12.2022

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Timor accessed 10.12.2022

In 1910 the head tax was increased from 1 to 2.5 patacas, at the same time the monarchy in Portugal was overthrown. The arrival of these two pieces of information prompted rebellion in East Timor, which was suppressed by Portuguese naval gunfire and soldiers, resulting in 3000 dead locals. After the rebellion, Portugal started some investments in the nation, but they were made largely for Portugal's own economical growth, neglecting the local economy.³¹ Until World War 2 Portugal's main use for East Timor was as a place to exile criminals and dissidents, at the same time Portugal mainly took as much economical benefit as they could, exploiting the area's resources especially roughly during the great depression.

In the 1930s Japan had made a quite significant investment in the area's economy controlling most of the colony's imports and exports through ownership of the colony's biggest plantation company.³² During World War 2 the allies were concerned about Japan's expansive military ambitions in the area. Preempting an invasion, there were brought around 400 Dutch, British and Australian troops to defend the area together with local volunteers. In February Japan attacked East Timor fighting against the guerrilla soldiers operating from the mountains. This war cost greatly to the locals when in reaction to guerrilla attacks Japan burned villages and seized the local food supply. The occupation resulted in the deaths of 40 000 - 70 000 civilians.³³

After ww2 and the falling apart of the Portuguese colonial empire

When the war ended East Timor was returned to the colonial overlord Portugal, meanwhile Indonesia gained independence in 1949. After the return, Portugal kept on neglecting the colony, building very little new infrastructure in the area. At the same time, the level of education the population received was extremely low, having handed the colony's education to the church in 1941. After the war, the country's literacy rate did not rise significantly and the economy grew only by about 2% a year between 1953 and 1962.³⁴ In 1955 Portugal declared East Timor an overseas province, as an attempt to answer the calls for global decolonisation, by claiming the area not as a colony, but as a province. This change in status was expected to accompany larger investments to the island, but it never materialized with East Timor's illiteracy rate in 1973 being estimated at a whopping 93% of the population.³⁵

³¹ https://books.google.fi/books?id=WGZ0CgAAQBAJ&pg=PA96&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false accessed 11.12.2022

³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Timor accessed 11.12.2022

³³ <http://easttimorgovernment.com/history.htm> accessed 11.12.2022

³⁴ <http://easttimorgovernment.com/history.htm> accessed 11.12.2022

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Timor#cite_note-18 accessed 11.12.2022

After Indonesia's declaration of independence there were limited talks on the possibility of Indonesia wanting to annex East Timor as a part of their nation. President Sukarno of Indonesia answered these claims in the United Nations Indonesia declared that they only wanted the territory formerly colonized by the Netherlands. At the time Indonesia's interests were focused on West Irian, still occupied by the Dutch. Indonesia went as far as to declare that Indonesia was not interested in East Timor at all.

In 1959 the Viqueque rebellion erupted in the southern part of East Timor in the provinces of Uatolari and Uatocarbau. The rebellion was the only uprising between WW2 and the Indonesian invasion. In the uprising, the locals demanded independence from Portugal. Portugal suppressed the revolt swiftly, but gave something as a reaction, increasing the local education and possibilities for employment.

In 1960 Portugal's claims on East Timor as a province were questioned when the United Nations's general assembly passed resolution number 1542. The resolution marked East Timor as a non-self-governing territory and called for Portugal to change the situation, by giving limited self-governance to the area.³⁶ Portugal complied by giving East Timor limited self-governance, under the administrative power of Lisbon.



All the colonies Portugal has had³⁷

³⁶ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/204797?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header> resolution 1542. accessed 11.12.2022

³⁷ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Portuguese_Empire.png accessed 11.12.2022

On the 25th of April 1974 took place the first event marking the total dissolution of the Portuguese colonial empire. On the 25th a coup d'état took place in Portugal, where the old pro-colonial government was replaced with a new military junta, which would rule Portugal for a transition period to democracy. One of the key policies of the new junta was to abandon colonial possessions and grant the old colonies independence without a fight.³⁸ This Carnation Revolution was largely caused by the Portuguese fight against independence movements in its colonies, especially in Africa. This revolution marked a more peaceful transition for countries such as Angola and Mozambique but East Timor had not fought for independence but was given a track to it nonetheless.³⁹

Beginning of local rule and the civil war

The first step towards East Timor's independence after the Carnation Revolution was the appointment of the first and the last Portuguese governor of East Timor Mário Lemos Pires on the 18th of November 1974. Pires had received an order to prepare East Timor for independence, because of which his first act as a governor was to legalise political parties in the province in preparation for the election planned for 1976.

After the legalisation of parties, the Australian Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam told prime minister Suharto that in his opinion an independent East Timor would be a risk to the stability of the whole area, and that he thought the best action would be to annex East Timor into Indonesia.⁴⁰ In the election of 1975 UDT and Fretilin became the largest parties forming an alliance based on guiding East Timor to independence. In response, Indonesia began operation Komodo, with the plan of separating the two parties, and stopping the advance of independence. Indonesians gave UDT false military information claiming that Fretilin was about to oust them from power, with a coup d'état.

Upon hearing the information that a coup had been planned against UDT they quickly started, what they believed would be a counter-coup, against Fretilin. UDT did not have the resources to fight the coup they had started and Fretilin pushed the UDT militias quickly to the western part of the country. In reaction to the coup governor, Pires left the main island and tried to mitigate a peaceful solution between the parties.⁴¹

³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnation_Revolution accessed 11.12.2022

³⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Colonial_War accessed 11.12.2022

⁴⁰ <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/1999/03/whit-m09.html> accessed 11.12.2022

⁴¹ <http://www.easttimorgovernment.com/history.htm> accessed 11.12.2022

Many of the UDT supporters fled to Indonesia, where they signed a paper calling for the unification of East Timor with Indonesia. After Indonesia had the paper as a pretext for the invasion, they started border skirmishes with East Timor. These border attacks prompted one of the most important events during the attack when Indonesia killed five Australian journalists in the border town of Balibo.⁴²

After East Timor realized that Portugal didn't have the willingness to interfere with the de facto war Indonesia was having with them, Fretilin declared independence on the 28th of November 1975, making Francisco Xavier do Amaral the country's first president. No major nations recognized this declaration and Indonesia made the opposition parties sign the Balibo Declaration trying to justify the war that was coming.

Indonesian invasion

On the 7th of December 1975 Indonesia launched a massive land, air and naval attack against East Timor. On the morning of the 7th of December Indonesia began the attacks against East Timor by first shelling the capital of Dilli with naval gunfire. After the first attack, Indonesian marines attacked the beaches of Kampung Alor capturing them quickly. As the last act for the battle of Dilli Indonesia landed around 500 soldiers, capturing East Timor's main airforce base in Mariun. The most important battle between East Timor and Indonesia resulted in the deaths of a few hundred soldiers and Portugal cutting diplomatic relations with Indonesia.⁴³

Three days later on the 10th of December Indonesia started the second massive military operation against East Timor with the attack on Baucau, the second largest city of East Timor. The last major battle of the operation came on Christmas day when Indonesia landed a further 10 to 15 thousand soldiers in the last crucial provinces not yet controlled by them. In 1976 around 35 000 Indonesian troops occupied the country, with around 10 000 in reserve in West Timor. In 1976 there were around 10 000 troops in Dilli and the rest in other provinces.

⁴² [theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/30/east-timor-indonesias-invasion-and-the-long-road-to-independence](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/30/east-timor-indonesias-invasion-and-the-long-road-to-independence) accessed 11.12.2022

⁴³ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Dili accessed 12.12.2022



Indonesian troops in front of the house, where the Australian journalists were killed⁴⁴

When the Indonesian troops occupied large portions of the country the Fretilin militias, called the Falintil troops,⁴⁵ fled to the mountainous interior of the country where from they started a guerrilla war campaign against the Indonesian invaders. Frightened by the sneak attacks of the Falintil soldiers Indonesian troops began conducting massacres all around the country trying to kill Falintil soldiers, which sometimes were dressed in civilian clothing. Because of this unimaginably harsh rule over the civilians over 100 000, East Timorese died in the first year of the occupation.⁴⁶

In the first years of the conflict Indonesia faced surprisingly stiff resistance from a force only a fraction of its size. The Falintil troops comprised of only about 2500 troops, but they were well-trained professional soldiers, who were extremely skilled in fighting in the local terrain. Even though the Indonesian troops outnumbered the Falintils many times, the Falintils still were able to hold most of East Timor's mountainous interior. In the first years, Indonesian troops had unquestionable power just in the largest cities. But despite controlling the cities Indonesia had

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/30/east-timor-indonesias-invasion-and-the-long-road-to-independence> accessed 12.12.2022

⁴⁵ <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=29&lang=en> accessed 12.12.2022

⁴⁶ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/indonesia-invades-east-timor> accessed 12.12.2022

even less control over the population, with a large portion of the population fleeing to the mountains or to nearby countries when Indonesian troops achieved power in their home area.⁴⁷

The Indonesian occupation of East Timor lasted from 1975 to 2022, after president Suharto was ousted from office in Indonesia and the new president B.J Habibi promised East Timor a fair election, where the people of East Timor could decide for themselves, between being an autonomous province of Indonesia, or becoming Independent. East Timorese people chose the latter one, and a bloody transitional period followed, which eventually resulted in the independence of East Timor.⁴⁸

Reaction of the international community

At the time of the invasion the reaction of the international community largely comprised of the reaction of three countries important to East Timor: the USA, Australia and Portugal. None of these countries really did anything significant to oppose Indonesia's illegal invasion of East Timor. But even when no country really tried to stop the invasion the actions of some countries were so pro-Indonesian that they don't feel logical to any level knowing that the attack against East Timor was illegal and unprovoked.⁴⁹

Australia was most likely the country with the most influence in the conflict and their reaction was one of if not the most interesting ones, regarding the conflict. Australia's role was extremely monumental in the way how East Timor's history played out after the Portuguese left the island. On the 6th of September 1974 then prime minister Gough Whitlam defacto gave his support to the Indonesian invasion by writing that he thinks that the best course of action would be by unifying East Timor with Indonesia. Knowing how sensitive of a topic such support for an invasion could be in Australia he added: "For the domestic audience in Australia, incorporation into Indonesia should appear to be a natural process arising from the wishes of the people."⁵⁰ This meant that Whitlam had no intention of ensuring that the locals actually supported the invasion, but he wanted it to look that way to ease the public pressure. Even when the invasion of East Timor had started and the news of massacres arrived in Australia the government played them down. The reaction of Australia to the invasion shows well in Whitlam's words: "I

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_invasion_of_East_Timor#Operasi_Seroja_\(1975%E2%80%931977\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_invasion_of_East_Timor#Operasi_Seroja_(1975%E2%80%931977)) accessed 12.12.2022

⁴⁸ <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/schools/indonesia/east-timor> accessed 12.12.2022

⁴⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_East_Timor#Indonesian_invasion_and_annexation accessed 12.12.2022

⁵⁰ <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/1999/03/whit-m09.html> accessed 12.12.2022

am convinced that what the Indonesian government is doing is visibly beneficial for the East Timorese people and will achieve a long-term improvement in conditions.”⁵¹

The reaction of the USA led by the foreign minister Kissinger was not much better either. Like Australia, the USA was never public about their support for the war in East Timor, but silently the support was strong. The reason for USA's strong support for Indonesia was Indonesia's strong policies against communism. USA's political theories were largely influenced at the time by the domino theory, which stated that when one nation falls to communism soon enough the bordering nations will come with it. At the time the USA had also just lost the Vietnam war and in the minds of US politicians, it was clear that East Timor's possible falling to communism would result in a wider wave of communism, however unlikely this shift in East Timorese politics would be. In the war, the USA not only sold weapons to Indonesia but also gave direct financial assistance, about 20 million dollars⁵² of it being military aid. In the years of the Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor USA remained fairly silent about the whole situation. But even when the USA publicly never announced support, USA's arms support did not lower down. In all stages of the conflict, most of Indonesia's weapons came from the USA, through military aid or simply buying.⁵³ The US's reaction towards the Indonesian invasion could be summed up by the words of a high-ranking US diplomat Philip Habib: "I think it is a situation in which we should just do nothing. It is quite obvious that the Indonesians are not going to let any hostile element take over an island right in the midst of the Indonesian archipelago."

After the start of the invasion, some nations opposed the operation but still, opposition to Indonesia's operation was limited. The opposition that Indonesia faced came from Portugal, former Portuguese colonies in Africa and Singapore. In the beginning, Singapore was clearly opposed to the invasion, but as time went on Singapore accepted the invasion⁵⁴ and called it "fait accompli", meaning something that has happened and is not reversible.⁵⁵ Throughout the conflict Portugal and its former colonies were one of the only nations clearly opposing the war. Portugal took a hard stand against Indonesia's actions expressing strong diplomatic opposition. At the beginning of the war, Portugal cut off all diplomacy with Indonesia and said about the invasion: "had abruptly altered the course of the decolonization process which should and could

⁵¹ <https://academic.oup.com/policy-press-scholarship-online/book/31165/chapter/264208648> accessed 12.12.2022

⁵² Note inflation. Currency being 1974 us dollars - worth about 120 million in today's currency.

⁵³ <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB174/1010.pdf> accessed 12.12.2022

⁵⁴ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_East_Timor#East_Timor_solidarity_movement accessed 13.12.2022

⁵⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fait%20accompli> accessed 13.12.2022

have been concluded peacefully.” Portugal also achieved some diplomatic victories against Indonesia. Portugal for example called for the gathering of the security council to discuss and “to bring an end to the military aggression by Indonesia and to establish conditions that would enable the decolonization process to continue.” Because of Portugal’s motion the security council met five times to discuss the topic and finally passed resolution 384 deploring the invasion and calling for the “Secretary-General to send urgently a special representative to East Timor to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation and to establish contact with all the parties in the territory and all states concerned in order to ensure the implementation of this resolution.” Portugal’s former colonies also participated by voting against Indonesia and by expressing public dissatisfaction with Indonesia’s actions.⁵⁶

Consequences of the occupation of East Timor

The Indonesian invasion and the following occupation of East Timor resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of East Timorese and in the suffering of many more. The occupation killed in the first year more than 100 000 East Timorese⁵⁷ and between 1975 and 1999 about 170 000 people, which is about 25% of East Timor’s total population. And this number does not include the killings done by pro-Indonesian militias between 1999 and 2002, which ended up most likely in thousands of deaths. There are many good examples of the brutality of the occupation, the clearest one being the killing of more than one-quarter of the population, scaled to the size of Finland the brutality conducted in East Timor would mean about 1.4 million dead Finns.



⁵⁶ <https://academic.oup.com/policy-press-scholarship-online/book/31165/chapter/264208648#264208746> accessed 13.12.2022

⁵⁷ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/indonesia-invades-east-timor> accessed 13.12.2022

A picture from the Santa Cruz massacre, in the back, shows people running from the cemetery.⁵⁸

As for the other atrocities conducted by Indonesia worth mentioning are the killing of five Australian journalists, the bloodbath of the Santa Cruz cemetery and the 1999 East Timor crisis. In the killing of the Balibo five, Indonesia killed five Australian journalists because they were filming the invasion that Indonesia denied conducting. The reporters were clearly members of the media and held their hands up, but despite that Indonesian troops cold-heartedly shot them. Then in the massacre of the Santa Cruz cemetery, a few thousand East Timorese had gathered near the grave of the freedom fighter Sebastião Gomes, when the people took out pro-East Timorese flags the Indonesian soldiers opened fire on the protestors killing at least 250 civilians.⁵⁹ Then lastly the East Timorese massacre of 1999 was the attack against the East Timorese population after East Timor voted for their independence during the same year. The killing was done by pro-Indonesia militias, but it was supported by the Indonesian military the massacre led to the deaths of around 1400 people and forced around 220 000 to leave their homes.⁶⁰

To put it shortly the invasion and occupation led to a great amount of suffering for the East Timorese civilians, which significantly slowed the country's development.

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

East Timor

East Timor was first under the influence of Portugal, after which they got a short period of relative independence, but in which they were largely manipulated by mainly Indonesia. In the end, Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor, causing great suffering and creating another fight for freedom in the history of East Timor. East Timor's stance on its own independence is quite clear, with the country of course wanting to control itself.

Indonesia

Indonesia invaded and through a fight, later annexed the country in question, East Timor. Indonesia's rule over East Timor was violent and bloody, involving countless massacres and genocide. Indonesia annexed East Timor with the claim that the country was turning towards

⁵⁸ <https://www.jn.pt/mundo/chacina-em-dili-aconteceu-ha-25-anos-5494179.html> accessed 13.12.2022

⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Cruz_massacre accessed 13.12.2022

⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1999_East_Timorese_crisis accessed 13.12.2022

communism, but the real reason lies in Indonesia's want for more territory. Indonesia's views on the matter are quite clear, it being the nations wanting to invade East Timor.

Portugal

Portugal had a vital role in world politics and in the reaction towards the invasion. In the modern history of East Timor, Portugal's role was extremely significant, with for example Portugal being the nation that gave East Timor its independence and in that way made possible East Timor's development towards being invaded. Portugal was one of the only countries clearly opposing the invasion of East Timor, in fact even raising the subject in the UN security council.

Australia

Making the invasion possible by politically supporting Indonesia's annexation of East Timor. Australia was a major player in the politics of the area and a close ally of Indonesia. That's also why Indonesia consulted Australia if it would accept the invasion. Throughout the invasion, Australia had the political power to stop Indonesia's actions, but instead of opposing the war, Australia expressed its clear support even when the news came of massacres and Australian journalists being killed. Australia tried to justify their actions by the opposing of communism.

USA

USA's role in the conflict is frequently downplayed when discussing the invasion of East Timor. At the time of the invasion, the USA was in the midst of the cold war, and they had just lost the war in Vietnam. By the ruling foreign politics doctrine, the loss of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos to communism would mark all of the other nearby countries falling to communism by the Domino theory. Because of the theory and larger power plays in the cold war, the USA decided to support its ally Indonesia in the conflict, despite knowing the horrendous crimes of war, carried out by Indonesia. The USA gave extremely large financial support to Indonesia.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
April 20, 1859	Portugal and the Netherlands settle the divisions of Timor

January 1, 1909	East Timor is made a full province of Portugal ⁶¹
February 20, 1942	Japan invades East Timor ⁶²
December 15, 1960	UN passes the resolution 1542 questioning Portugal's colonialism
April 25, 1974	Carnation revolution takes place in Portugal
November 18, 1974	Mário Lemos Pires becomes the first governor of East Timor
March 13, 1975	Fretilin and UDT emerge as the largest parties ⁶³
August 20, 1975	The civil war in East Timor begins
November 28, 1975	Fretilin declares East Timor independent
December 7, 1975	Indonesia launches operation Seroja
December 10, 1975	The second largest city of East Timor is captured
December 12, 1975	UN passes resolution 3485 recognising Portugal's rule over East Timor ⁶⁴

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations had a clear role in the development of East Timor's situation. When the war began UN had a strong role, in condemning Indonesia's actions and establishing Portugal as the rightful owner of the territory. Even when nearly all countries of the western world supported the invasion to some extent, the UN stayed decisive in condemning the attack. UN's role was much more significant at the end of the occupation when they made the East Timor's transition to democracy possible.

- Resolution 1514, 15 December 1960 (**A/RES/1514(XV)**)⁶⁵
 - Calls for Portugal to respect the right of East Timorese people to be able to govern themselves and decide their own political status
- Resolution 3485, 12 December 1975 (**A/RES/3485(XXX)**)⁶⁶
 - The resolution condemns Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, calls for Indonesia to stop the attempt of the annexation of East Timor and reaffirms the people of East Timor's right to political freedom
- Resolution 384, 22 December 1975 (**S/RES/384(1975)**)⁶⁷

⁶¹ <https://journals.openedition.org/archipel/416> accessed 13.12.2022

⁶² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Timor accessed 13.12.2022

⁶³ <http://www.easttimorgovernment.com/history.htm> accessed 13.12.2022

⁶⁴ <http://www.easttimorgovernment.com/history.htm> accessed 13.12.2022

⁶⁵ file:///C:/Users/JoonaJokiniemi/Downloads/A_RES_1514(XV)-EN.pdf accessed 13.12.2022

⁶⁶ file:///C:/Users/JoonaJokiniemi/Downloads/A_RES_3485(XXX)-EN.pdf accessed 13.12.2022

⁶⁷ file:///C:/Users/JoonaJokiniemi/Downloads/S_RES_384(1975)-EN.pdf accessed 13.12.2022

- The resolution calls upon all nations to respect the sovereignty of East Timor, recognizes the right to self-determination to the people of East Timor and Recognizes Portugal as the administrative power of East Timor.
- Resolution 389, 22 April 1976 **(S/RES/389(1976))**⁶⁸
 - Resolution 389 mainly just holds the points in resolution 384, but it adds that the question of East Timor is under general assembly and requests the Secretary-General to have his Special Representative continue the assignment entrusted to him.

Possible Solutions

Respecting East Timor's sovereignty and giving it independence

Indonesia could withdraw its forces from East Timor and for example, provide the country with a plan for transitioning to democracy. The plan would most likely include a period of transition, which would mean limited self-governing, helped by the UN. During the process of transition, elections could be held in the future country and some bases could be made for the future structure of the nation's government. This is the path that would most likely take East Timor towards democracy, but it would also provide the possibility of a communist government taking power. This path would most likely be the most effective solution to issues like the population rebelling against the government, this path could also lead to a civil war or some other crisis in the decision of the country's form of government. This is close to the path East Timor took between 1999 and 2002.

Making East Timor a province of Indonesia with limited autonomy

Rather than giving East Timor full independence, it could be given limited self-governing in decisions regarding its domestic policies. In this solution, East Timor could have the power to decide on issues like education, infrastructure and health care, but issues such as defence or foreign policy could be decided by Indonesia. In this format problems like rebelling and guerilla warfare would most likely be solved, at least temporarily, because the issues to rebel against would become less problematic. This still would not guarantee a solution to all the problems regarding the nationals' dissatisfaction towards the government, because this solution would not give total political freedom to the citizens. This strategy was implemented to some degree during the occupation, but still, the amount of power held by the Indonesians in East Timor was

⁶⁸ file:///C:/Users/JoonaJokiniemi/Downloads/S_RES_389(1976)-EN.pdf accessed 13.12.2022

so great, that it could not provide a solution to the large-scale discontent felt by the people of East Timor.

Giving East Timor independence with a foreign-chosen government

If the risk of a regime opposed to western values is too great in East Timor, it could be done so, that the country would be made independent, but with a government at least partially chosen by the Indonesians and other anti-Soviet nations. This could at least temporarily calm down the local population, this would also most likely decrease the amount of force used against the local population because they would have more significant autonomy. In the negatives, it must be noted, that a foreign-held ruler of an independent state will not most likely survive forever and the replacement can be very heavily set against the western nations. This overthrow of a western set leader is for example what happened in Iran with Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. If seeing the situation, where the population of East Timor must be kept from rebelling against the occupying government, it might be so, that a state of Independence supervised by for example Indonesia would be a solution, where Indonesia would not lose its power over the country, but the control it possesses would become less obvious.

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