Chapter- I
INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORY OF EAST TIMOR
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The contemporary international politics has been stirred up with the resurgence of ethnic and territorial nationalism in various parts of the globe. The doctrine of self-determination is back with more power than before. East Timor, Chechnya, Kosovo, Aceh Abkhazia, Nagorno-karabakh and Transnistria are among the few to be cited. In almost all cases, the plot is the same although the characters and the stages are different. Normally, staying at the remote corner of the country they say they are a majority locally but a minority in the larger stage. They shout for independence even at the cost of their own blood. The wave of ethnic claims to self-determination has necessarily threatened the international order and security scenario. The existing international order based on state sovereignty, territorial integrity, the inviolability of international borders and non-intervention in the internal affairs of another state, is giving way to international disorder. The outcome of the instability has questioned the inter-state relations as well as the relationship between great and regional powers.

At the face of the growing trend for ethnic-national self-determination, one of the most important problems confronting developing countries is how to promote national integration - how to bind together the various regions and diverse peoples of a country into a well-functioning and interdependent whole. Cohesive forces are essential not only to ensure the continued existence of the nation-state as one political entity and give political stability, but also to enable economic development to take place. For without some measure of integration, both human and
material resources that are needed to raise living standards are to be diverted instead toward coping with the centrifugal forces of regional disaffection or rebellion.¹

Since its very birth as independent nation-state, the problem of national integration has been a constant headache for Indonesia’s governing elite in policy-making. Indonesia’s geographic boundaries, and indeed the very idea of it as a nation-state, are a creation of Dutch colonialism. Ethnically, Indonesia contains over three hundred different groups speaking more than two hundred and fifty distinct languages.² It is indeed very stimulating to analyse the various aspects of Indonesian life and culture which covers a wide spectrum of the interesting diversities in the customs, traditions and spiritual beliefs of more than two hundred million Indonesians. Depending on whom he is speaking, an Indonesian will identify himself usually first by his village, then his ethnic group, and lastly, when meeting a foreigner, his country. This diverse population was put together by history as an outcome of Dutch colonialism. It was the Dutch colonialism and people’s struggle against the colonial powers in later years that provided various ethnic groups in Indonesia with a sense of national belonging. Despite the boost of the Indonesian nationalist leaders about the famous Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms of the past, it is a fact that Indonesia is not an incarnation of those great empires, rather the glory of which were successfully used as assets in the process of nation-building.

Today, the territorial nation-state is being challenged from two sides. From above, at the supranational level it is being challenged by forces such as the multi-national companies, common markets, globalisation of economy, interdependence among nations, as well as because of the advancement in information technology, international public opinion through global network and telecommunications etc. None of the above has much respect for the traditional political boundaries and the integrity of the sovereign state. And from the below, at the sub-national level the nation-state is being threatened by a new wave of ethnic nationalism that has manifested itself across the globe, demanding either greater autonomy or self-determination.

The second phenomenon, i.e. ethnic nationalism, has been fed by three major developments. The first is the democratisation of hitherto authoritarian societies, which gives ethnic minorities in those countries the freedom to express themselves. The second is the heightened international concern of the international community for human rights, including those of minorities. Third is the greater scope that the emerging regional powers enjoy,3 to add coal to the castle, in the developments of their neighbouring countries - either for the sake of taking advantages of the situation or out of a desire to beggar one's neighbour.

The birth of the first nation-state of the new millennium from out of Indonesian rule is a typical case in point. Key events in 1998 - the deepening of the Asian financial crisis, its consequences in Indonesia, and the growing demand and for democratisation, led President Suharto depart from the centre stage after a long thirty two years rule (the longest era in Asia by

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any ruler) which triggered a dramatic transformation in the Indonesian political landscape. Systemic weakness of Indonesia came to surface, but at the same time new possibilities emerged on the horizon including the possibility that the hitherto intractable issues such as the question of East Timor could be resolved. The announcement by Indonesia's then President Dr. B.J. Habibie in June 1998 to go for a referendum to determine the fate of East Timor, so far an ulcer in Indonesia's relation to the rest of the world, opened a new gate. As Indonesia happens to be Australia's biggest and powerful neighbour, it was obviously concerned and found no better opportunity to pay the so-called debt to the Timorese who had sacrificed thousands of lives in order to save the Australian soldiers during the second world war against the ruthless Japanese attack. The Indonesian relation with Australia as far as the Timor is concerned, and how the Australians played a significant role towards leading the world community in the East Timor's disintegration process will be analysed in a later chapter. But before that, it is important to discuss the history of East Timor, its people and the long colonial politics involved in it.

The Island of White Sandalwood

Timor is the largest and most easterly of the Lesser Sunda Islands, or Nusa Tenggara, which stretch out between Bali and Australia. Long before the Portuguese and Dutch entered the region, the island of Timor formed part of the trading networks centered politically on East Java and then on the Celebes (Sulawesi). These networks were tied into commercial links with China and India. The commercial value of Timor is highlighted in
documents published during the Ming dynasty in 1436. The island is described as one in which 'the mountains are covered with sandal trees and the country produces nothing else'. Duarte Barbosa, one of the first Portuguese to visit Timor, wrote in 1518: ‘there is an abundance of white sandalwood, which the moors in India and Persia value greatly, where much of it is used’.

Some historians observe that Timor’s role in the sandalwood trade had influenced its development of early political systems. The sixteenth century Dutch administrator and anthropologist Schulte-Nordholt’s observation gets one with certain Chinese report that there was one not-so-well-defined system of kingship in some parts of Timor to whom taxes were paid. When the Timorese see their kings they sit down on the ground with folded hands. As ethnographer Middelkoop narrates a Timorese myth, ‘a long, long time ago there was one ruler of this island in Baliko-Babali (the southern coastal plain). The ritual ruler of this realm appears to have had three subordinate rulers (liurai) immediately under him, each of whom exercised executive power in his own territory’. However, it is interesting that prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, the island of Timor had been under the influence of the Javanese empires of Srivijaya and Majapahits, and was part of what the Indonesians called Nusa Tenggara. In 672 AD Timor

5 Ibid. p. 117.
became part of Srivijaya and later the Majapahits had kept the island for two hundred years until 1520.9

With the decline of Majapahits in the fifteenth century, the port of Malacca, by then an important centre of trade with advanced political system and an Islamic centre, was controlling the spice trade network of eastern Indonesia to India and China. The Portuguese entry into Timor was largely a consequence of Lisbon's conquest of Malacca in 1511. Although as early as 1512, Timor had been mentioned by Portuguese sailors, it was until 1566 that Portugal could establish a post near Timor. With the post built by Domican priests at Solor Island, the Portuguese traders sailed to Timor to trade sandalwood and so did their soldiers and sailors who mixed freely and married with local women, which eventually produced a mixed-blood generation known as 'Topasses' or 'Black Portuguese', a designation whose origins historians have seen either in their role as interpreters (from Gujarati word tupasse, interpreter) or their mode of dress (from the Indian topee walas, hatmen).10 Over the years the Topasses out-numbered the Portuguese in the region and became powerful in sandalwood trade over the Portuguese merchants, Dominican friars and the Timorese themselves.

Portuguese presence in the region was then seriously challenged by Dutch which took over Solor in 1613. By 1653, the Dutch began to consolidate their hold over Western Timor and from 1662 onwards, began displaying the Portuguese, even though their competition was regulated by a treaty entered into a year earlier 1661, which gave Dutch the western part of the Timor

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island. In November 1851, the governor from Portugal entered into an agreement with the Dutch to have the territorial jurisdiction to the eastern half of East Timor under Portuguese control. In April 1859, the Treaty of Lisbon was signed giving de jure status to the 1851 agreement. Finally, it was in 1914 that Timor had been divided down the middle by a territorial agreement brokered by the International Court of Justice for the convenience of both.

In third world countries, many of the conflicts and tensions emanating today from territorial claims and counter-claims among neighbouring states have got roots from their respective colonial past. The unnatural boundaries drawn with different spheres of influence by the colonial masters for mutual economic exploitation later gave rise to post-independence confrontations among many Afro-Asian states. The European colonial powers never heeded the natural boundaries on the basis of ethnicity, language or common culture. This later led to unending tensions and armed conflicts once the colonial masters left them at their own fate.

Conscious of their small numbers, Portuguese established their tenacious hold in the archipelago mainly in three ways - their capacity to use extra-ordinary blend of races which formed the administrative hierarchy of the colony - the European, Chinese, African, Goanese, Timorese and Arabs; secondly, their instinct to interfere as little as possible of divide and rule among the local chiefs, the *regulos* as are called, or the *radjas* as they were called in Dutch Timor. In the western Timor the Dutch pursued a different policy through which they sought to bring as many Timorese as possible under the writ of administration. Dutch was

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more oppressive than Portuguese. Where the Portuguese sought to reinforce the authority of *regulos*, the Dutch sought to curb that of their *radjas*. With the Portuguese system receiving an enduring loyalty among the chieftains, they could stay longer with their colony than the Dutch.

But as far as development is concerned, East Timor was a neglected part of Portuguese Empire. The Portuguese had limited control of it, control being mainly confined to coastal outposts. Portugal, being some 15,000 miles away, the Portuguese themselves knew very little of what was happening in their overseas province and 'it (Portuguese Timor) had very little to do with Portugal,' unlike other imperial powers such as British in India or the French in Algeria having cultural impact on colonies. The infrastructure of Portuguese Timor was underdeveloped with transportation and communication facilities largely inadequate even in Dili. From social service, such as education and health point of view, it was too inadequate. Most of the schools which catered for pupils at the first level were built only from 1965 onwards. By the time the Portuguese abandoned the colony they had to their credit only one secondary school. The survey conducted by United Nations in 1971 showed the poor health service, with only 27 physicians at the rate of one physician for 2,500 people.

East Timorese had already paid a heavy price due to the Japanese attack during World War II, both in terms of human and material devastation. After the Japanese invasion of Pearl

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Harbour, 400 members of the 2/2 and 2/4 Australian Commandos landed in Dili and subsequently withdrew to mountains from where they organised a guerilla war assisted by the local Timorese against the Japanese and holding down a force of some 20,000 Japanese before evacuation to Darwin. The guerilla campaign led to the widespread repression of the native population by the Japanese occupiers and it is thought that some 70,000 East Timorese died during the war. James Dunn, former Australian Consul to East Timor, has described this as a largely unacknowledged debt owed to East Timor by Australia. Once the Japanese left, the Portuguese returned to resume their traditional pattern of colonialism having the control reasserted quiet ruthlessly.

**Political Awakening**

In the post war period, the Portuguese Timor derived little benefit from the post war economic recovery because the Portuguese dictator Antonio de Oliveria Salazar refused the offer of US Marshall Aid. However, the colony's fate changed in April 1974, when the Armed Forces Movement took over power in Portugal and ended the dictatorship of Prime Minister Marcello Caetano. Prior to April 1974, Portugal had self-acclaimed with a unique responsibility to 'civilise' its colonies. This justification for the so-called 'white man's burden' was the reason for holding on to its colonies even long after the other European powers had left their colonial possessions. However, as one of Europe's oldest imperial powers, Portugal had done very little to prepare its colonies for

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selfgovernment. The examples of its five African colonies, Goa and above all, East Timor tell all about it. Those two years 1974-76 were to spell disaster for distant East Timor as the left-leaning Armed Force Movement government in Lisbon sought to strike a deal with Jakarta which would rid them of a troublesome burden.\textsuperscript{16} Illiteracy in East Timor in 1973 was estimated at 93 per cent. No preparation was given for the creation of democratic institutions and political parties. Nevertheless, after April 1974, Portugal's new rulers could not get out of the colonies quickly enough.

East Timor was different from the African colonies in one major respect. In Africa, the conflict generated by the guerilla groups had been so intense that it was the main factor in initiating the Portuguese coup. The forces had become weary of loosing troops in Africa. East Timor, by contrast, had long been peaceful. There were almost no political activists. The daily grind of trying to survive, along with religion, were the main concerns of the people, not the political ideology.\textsuperscript{17} Even, the United Nations General Assembly, the Northern NGOs and other international conferences prior to 1974 were focusing more about the events of Portugal's African territories, having ignored East Timor.

Inside East Timor, except the elite, there was hardly any Portuguese impact on the rural society. At the height of political instability in Lisbon, topics such as traditional marriages and education system were discussed in the few Catholic newspapers with tiny circulation such as \textit{A Provincia de Timor} and \textit{Seara}. Their political inexperience was perhaps best illustrated by their


\textsuperscript{17} Keith Suter, 'East Timor, West Papua/Irian and Indonesia', \textit{Minority Rights Group International}, Nov. 1997, p.11.
approaches made to the Indonesian Government in 1973 to assist in the struggle against colonialism. But it seems, the East Timorese elite, fuelled by the warnings of the Portuguese of the massive killings in the aftermath of the abortive communist coup of 30 September 1965 in Indonesia, had a scared opinion about the dictatorial regime in Jakarta. The possibility of any 'Indonesian rule thus held out the prospect not of decolonisation but of 'recolonisation under the Javanese'.

When the political parties were finally allowed to be organised in East Timor in late April and early May 1974, it was obvious that the two largest - the right of centre UDT (Uniao Democratica Timorense), and the more radical ASDT (Associacao Social Democratica Temorense or Association of Timorese Social Democrats; post-September 1974, Fritilin) were opposed to the idea of integration with Indonesia. ASDT/ Fretilin wanted independence promptly, while UDT proposed a gradual process involving an extended association with Portugal. The Portuguese flag, revered as a sacred object (lulik) was used skillfully by the UDT to attract members from the countryside. In case of Fretilin, many were Catholics trained in the Jesuit seminary of Dare, near Dili. From June and July, the Fretilin began to make tentative diplomatic contacts in the neighbouring countries of Indonesia and Australia. Meanwhile, apart from these two political parties, a third political party had been formed, whose title itself expressed its aims - 'the Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia'. But for the sake of public face-saving, after its founding meeting on 25 May, it changed its name to 'Timorese

Popular Democratic Association' or Apodeti. Its manifesto called for 'an autonomous integration into the Republic of Indonesia in accordance with international law'. The Gonclaves' sucos and the small Muslim community of Dili were Apodeti's main supporters.\textsuperscript{20} There are some allegations that the Indonesian intelligence service BAKIN was funding Apodeti and was keen to do personal favours for members through its agents in Dili's Indonesian consulate, traders and custom officials.\textsuperscript{21} Further, there are some reports that before the Lisbon coup BAKIN had already trained a number of pro-Apodeti East Timorese in radio broadcasting and interpreting.

Indonesia, until mid-1974, had been taking the official line rejecting any interest in East Timor. However, on 12 June, Deputy President of the Indonesian Parliament, John Naro, a member from eastern Indonesia, argued in Parliament that Indonesia should workout a special policy on Portuguese Timor so that finally that area will once again return to Indonesian control.\textsuperscript{22} Naro's statement brought much ponderance to the Timorese leaders who wanted independence, especially to Fretilin. In a bid to diffuse the irritation, Jose Ram-Horta from Fretilin visited Jakarta to investigate. Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik confirmed that 'the independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people in Timor. Whoever will govern in Timor after independence can be assured that Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p. 28.
\textsuperscript{21} See for more details J.S. Hoadley, \textit{The Future of Portuguese Timor}, Occasional Paper No. 27, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Singapore, 1975, P. 133-42.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Indonesia Current Affairs Translation Service}, Jakarta, June 1974.
and cooperation for the benefit of both countries'. A self-satisfied Horta returned from Jakarta armed with assurances.

But others in Jakarta, particularly the nationalists and the military hardliners saw in the Portuguese coup an opportunity to bring East Timor into Indonesian fold. 'Political parties, free debate, the end of censorship, social democracy, independence and internationally supervised referendum were all unpalatable items for the generals in Indonesia. The two as the main driving force were Suharto’s close advisor, the all-round fixer Major General Ali Murtopo, who headed Opsus, and his protege Brigadier General Benny Murdani, who at the time headed the military’s intelligence operation and having the closest CIA contacts in Indonesia'. General Murtopo as the key figure in Suharto’s inner cabinet had been famed for masterminding Suharto’s most successful coup to overthrow former President Sukarno and also, in the incorporation of West Papua New Guinea in 1969. It is indeed interesting how the small coterie of the military had turned to be the godfather of the New Order regime. Virtually everywhere – from defence, foreign affairs to internal security and diplomacy, even in setting country’s academic debates through think-tanks such as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) - their strong presence was felt.

Under the main guidance of General Murtopo, the Indonesian Intelligence Service BAKIN started the scheme called Operasi Komodo (Operation Giant Lizard) to integrate East Timor. Komodo employed several leading operatives, each with special

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aims. Elias Tomodok, the Indonesian consul in Dili had been doing a good service since 1968 in transmitting diplomatic messages from Dili to Jakarta, exaggerating support for integration and often, emphasising the worst aspects of Portuguese colonialism. Similarly, the governor of Indonesian Timor, El Tari, was an early 1970s recruit to BAKIN's plans. Together with a BAKIN agent from West Timor named Louis Taolin, he played a key role in early contacts with Apodeti members and East Timorese in the border areas. Outside Indonesia, the task of drumming up diplomatic support for integration in the United States and Western Europe was handed to a Sumatran, Liem Bian Kie (also known as Jusuf Wanandi). The director of CSIS, Harry Tjan Silalahai, took care of Australia and Portuguese. The Indonesian news agency, Antara, was organised to disseminate propaganda on East Timor to an international audience.2s Surprisingly, once the BAKIN's wheel started moving, more leading lights got infected, among the most unbelievable converts being none other than the Foreign Minister Adam Malik, who three months earlier had supported independence. In his 18 September statement, he publicly supported Apodeti.

A very big fish was yet to come into the net. At Wonosobo, a town near the Central Java City Yogyakarta, the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam met President Suharto with the sole aim of establishing good ties with Indonesia. Before meeting Suharto, the Australian Labour leader had met with some key BAKIN officers. In a candid expression the Australian Prime Minister said, an independent East Timor would be an unviable state and a

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potential threat to the area'. That is how Australia which could have acted as a restraining influence on Jakarta, effectively sold the pass to the Indonesian generals. A number of former Australian commandos who had fought against the Japanese on the soil of East Timor expressed their shame at betraying the people who had given so many lives in their defence during the Second World War. According to one commentator, 'Mr. Whitlam went much further, one suspects, than his Indonesian hosts required'. Then, Murtopo and his military clique undoubtedly were more than satisfied with the assumption that Indonesia would not be isolated internationally if they went with the integration plan.

Inside East Timor, the re-assertion of Timorese culture was emphasised by Fretilin to arouse popular sentiment against colonialism. Fretilin was the first of the Timorese parties to use local languages and also Portuguese at its meetings. It encouraged people to learn to read and write in their own languages first, not in Portuguese, as was the law in all schools then. Under the initiative of former Lisbon student Mau Lear, the most intelligent Fretilin member and some teachers who were recruited to collect material for a literacy work in Tetum, the popular Timorese language handbook *Rai Timor Rai Ita Niang* (Timor is our country) came out.

Apart from these educational activities, the Fretilin leaders chalked out a tentative economic programme referring the role of agriculture in economic development and also, the role of 'production cooperative'; and to market their goods the idea of

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27 Ibid.
'consumer co-operatives'. The growing awareness in Timor's regions that such policies could be achieved, produced a substantial swing to Fretilin in the later months of the year. By September 1975, Fretilin was the dominant authority in East Timor having the characteristics of a truly nationalist party even keeping UDT behind.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian intelligence officers initially pursuing a non-military strategy of annexation pinned their hopes on Apodeti and began describing Fretilin as a communist organisation and UDT as neo-fascist. Jakarta's fear might have come from two reasons. It was concerned that East Timor could become a 'Cuba on the doorstep'. According to Bill Nicol, Cuba inspired many Fretilin leaders having 'Cuba versus the United States phenomenon' providing a parallel with East Timor challenging Indonesia. Secondly, Indonesia worried that an independent East Timor within the confines of Indonesia's national territory would spark secessionist sentiments elsewhere in the archipelago. Nevertheless, the military countered these using its propaganda machinery. In November, *Berita Yudha*, the military mouthpiece exposed supposed 'Chinese involvement' in East Timor, notably in Fretilin. The Radio broadcasts from Jakarta and Kupang announced that Apodeti with seventy per cent support of the East Timorese favoured integration with Indonesia.

At this juncture, the *Komodo* group scored a point as President Suharto authorised Murtopo to handle all the

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negotiations with Portugal in this matter. On Murtopo's 14 October visit to Lisbon, the new President of Portugal, Costa Gomez, described independence for East Timor as 'unrealistic' and Prime Minister Vasco Goncalaves reportedly exclaimed that the independence notion was 'nonsense'. Gomez concluded that there were only two options for East Timor: integration with Indonesia or self-government under the aegis of Portugal, whilst Goncalves simply seemed to prefer integration.32 This declaration coincidingly echoed the same message, which Prof. Weatherbee had sounded years ago. In a perceptive article in 1966, Prof Weatherbee expressed a view commonly held at that time by many Australian officials, politicians and academics, that 'in a sense Portuguese Timor is a trust territory, the Portuguese holding it in trust for Indonesia?' 33 In Jia's seizure of Goa from the Portuguese in 1962 had been suggested as a precedent. Thus, the declaration of Portuguese President and Prime Minister bestowed every reason for General Murtopo to return home satisfied. Even earlier, a senior Portuguese official who was being interviewed by Australia's Bruce Stannard noted that: "Portugal had enough problems of her own at the moment....... We have our own revolution to attend to at home. We would say to Indonesians 'Hell, come on if you want to' ".34

But the subsequent attitude of the Portuguese government reflected inconsistency. On 25th November 1975, it appointed Colonel Lemos Pires as the new governor to East Timor. Unfortunately, he was given no systematic brief by the President,

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who nevertheless insisted to him that no compromise had been made with the Indonesian Government. The new governor's team included a number of other key officials among them most notably two younger officers who had earlier served Timor, Majors Jonatas and Mota. The government's main aim was to disengage with minimum delay and financial cost. Keeping this in mind, a troop reduction programme was undertaken with the number reduced from 3,000 in 1974 to only 200 by mid-1975. As Ramos-Horta commented, 'in my view the troops reduction was the single most damaging error committed by the Portuguese in 1974'. There were also signs that the Pires administration's approach to the problem differed from that of Lisbon. While the Lisbon government was prepared to acquiesce Timor's integration into Indonesia, the governor, being a supporter of Spinola's ideas (Predecessor of Costa Gomez), was more committed to East Timor's independence within the Portuguese Commonwealth. While publicly the new colonial administration proclaimed a position of neutrality vis-à-vis the three main political parties, in actuality, it favoured the Fretilin over others.

Until the arrival of the Pires administration, the colonial administration had favoured the UDT due to the latter's policy of remaining part of a Portuguese federation. In the new set up, there was growing convergence between the Pires administrators, especially Mota, the person in charge of political affairs in the colony and the Fretilin which was greatly helped by the fact that they shared the left-ward bias, as well as the fact that many of the

37 Ibid, p.35.
Fretilin leaders had some links with the junior officers of the Armed forces Movement (AFM), either during their service in the African colonies or in terms of ideological affinity. Thus, Mota did everything to reverse the preeminence of UDT. In order to bring about internal peace in the colony, as the three parties were invited to sit in the Decolonisation Commission, following the refusal of Apodeti, Mota engineered the discussion of coalition between the two remaining parties. Major Luis Cadet, the Head of Military Intelligence in the colony for a brief period, believed that the coalition was part of Mota’s scheme to emasculate the other political parties in favour of Fretilin.38 Admitting about the benefits the coalition brought to Fretilin, Ramos-Horta wrote, ‘the coalition brought more benefits to Fretilin than to UDT. It opened the terrain for Fretilin activists to carry our grassroot campaigns into UDT strongholds that were blocked previously. UDT supporters were always less solid, more easily swayed than Fretilin supporters, who were politically conscious’.39

UDT had begun the innings being the number one party, but gradually it started declining. On 17 July, Constitutional Law 7/75 was passed in Lisbon setting October 1978 as the date for the final Portuguese withdrawal following territory-wide election. But in the local council election in March 1975, supervised by the Decolonisation Commission, Fretilin did exceptionally well. However, when the result was out there was severe clashes between both the parties despite the coalition. On 27 May, the UDT leaders unilaterally left the coalition accusing that ‘the Fretilin has adopted a political line which could seriously

jeopardise the independence of Timor-Dili in so far as it endangers the internal security and stability of the geopolitical context of which we are part'.\(^{40}\) On the other hand, General Suharto during his trip to United States stated publicly that 'an independent East Timor is not viable.'\(^{41}\) Perhaps Jakarta could anticipate the USA's passive support for its aggressive stand. That was the year when US policy in the Vietnam collapsed and there was the fear that the 'red menace' would continue its march, thus an independent East Timor under Fretilin might have been risky.

In the second phase of the decolonisation talks held in Macau from 26-28 June, Fretilin did not participate citing the presence of Apodeti, which it viewed as a co-opted tool of Jakarta. Apodeti was able to portray itself internationally as a viable party; UDT was free to criticise Fretilin in an international press arena; and the Indonesians were able to make political capital out of Fretilin's intransigence.\(^{42}\) The summit finally decided to go for self-determination by the East Timorese.

The Komodo played its part in a tactical way. In July, they implanted rumours of possible Fretilin coup and in such an occasion, the supply of arms from China. Alarmed by fear-psychosis, the UDT leaders met Ali Murtopo in Jakarta who assured, in such an event Indonesia would intervene. Back to Dili, the UDT leaders started road-blocks and demonstrations with supporters attacking the Fretilin to be communist and vowing to expel the communists from Timor. The UDT leaders arrested Portuguese police and forced them to join with their arms. They

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41 Ibid, p. 119.
took control of the Dili and moved against centres of Fretilin support. In retaliation, Fretilin announced an 'armed insurrection' against 'traitors of the fatherland'. Fighting broke out in outlying areas and reached Dili by 20 August. By 21 August, it was clear that the Portuguese had lost control of the situation with Governor Pires withdrawing to a suburb in Dili and later, on 27 August, evacuating to the island of Atauro. Earlier on August 17, Majors Mota and Jonatas had left for Lisbon, as they were the special targets of UDT.

The situation took a dramatic turn as two important army garrisons in Aileu and Taibse declared their support for Fretilin. By 27 August, Dili was under complete control of Fretilin and subsequently, the regional areas of UDT support surrendered. When the main UDT force of 500 soldiers crossed into West Timor with 2,500 refugees and 19 Portuguese troops under Joao Carrascalao, they learned that Lopez da Cruz of UDT had signed a document committing UDT to Timorese integration with Indonesia.43 This petition was presented to Suharto as a collective plea from the people of East Timor. However, the reality is that it had been drawn up by Lopez da Cruz with the assistance of Komodo operative Colonel Sugiyanto in the middle of August.44 However, by September, Fretilin controlled all of East Timor except for a few villages close to West Timor border.

With Indonesia's full-fledged support, an anti-communist alliance was organised activated by the staunch Timorese integrationists - Lopez da Cruz of UDT, Guilherme Goncalves of Apodeti, Jose Martins of Kota and also, the leaders of tiny Trabalhista. It seems the komodo was initially confident, or rather

wished that the coup followed by the armed fight would produce a prolonged conflict whose chaos could provide a justification for Indonesian intervention. Frustrated, the generals involved were forced to retreat and rethink their strategy as Fretilin rapidly defeated UDT. Komodo leaders now thought of direct military action. As reported by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), two Indonesian special forces groups of about 100 men each entered Portuguese Timor on the evening of September 3-4; again on the 17th, 650 Timorese irregular troops, on the 19th more Indonesian troops, and on the 26th the special forces troops armed with weapons that couldn't be traced to Jakarta but reportedly from Malaysia.45 'Jakarta is now sending guerilla units into the Portuguese half of the island in order to engage Fretilin forces, encourage pro-Indonesian elements and provoke incidents that would provide the Indonesians with an excuse to invade should they decide to do so'.46 The result of these incursions was burnt houses in villages and people shot to death, particularly the Fretilin soldiers. For the international propaganda, the Indonesian press was reporting these incidents as a result of the resurgence of conflict between Fretilin and parties antagonistic to it.

During October and November, the civil war intensified with the help of the so-called UDT-Apodeti forces, backed by Indonesian 'volunteers', who successfully pushed back Fretilin from its strongholds, especially in the western parts of East Timor. On 7 October Batugade was captured, following which Maliana on 14 October. However, following the death of five Australian television journalists on 16 October in Balibo, there was an international outcry. But there was much controversy with

the Indonesian claim that the journalists were killed in crossfire between UDT and Fretilin forces.47

Meanwhile, Indonesia represented by Ali Murtopo met with Almeida Santos of Portugal in Rome on 3 November, where a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Adam Malik and Eduardo Antunes, the foreign ministers of both countries. But the follow-up talks between all-Timorese parties and Portugal never took place as Fretilin did not recognise the Rome talks, where Lisbon had recognised Indonesia as a party to the Timorese question. The rest of the world was silent towards the tussle of power in East Timor. The countries which mattered - Australia and United States - made it clear to Jakarta that they intended to stay uninvolved, which Jakarta interpreted as a tacit support for its integration plan.

Subsequently, as Indonesia piled in more troops with combined land, air and sea attacks, the fall of Atabae became unavoidable. In view of this, on 24 November the Fretilin leadership appealed to the United Nations for help. The strategically important village Atabae finally fell to UDT-Apodeti on 26 November. As the possibility of an invasion by Indonesia became more imminent, the Fretilin administration declared unilateral independence on 28 November 1975. There might be two reasons behind such a move. Firstly, it struck to the Fretilin leadership that an independent state would be better heard by the UN and secondly, sentiment was growing with their military front - if soldiers were to die, they would prefer to die for a country, which

was actually theirs.\textsuperscript{48} In the Democratic Republic of East Timor, Xavier da Amaral was inaugurated as the President on 29 November and on 1 December, a government was sworn in which Nicolau Lobato was the Prime Minister. In the next four days, the new state was recognised by Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tomo-Principe and Cape Vedre.\textsuperscript{49} However, both Indonesia and Portugal rejected this.

The BAKIN now got an opportunity to use the declaration as a justification towards fulfilling its own ambition. The four parties, UDT, Apodeti, KOTA and Trabalhista asserted that Fretilin’s unilateral declaration had ‘removed the last remains of Portuguese sovereignty in Timor’ and on 30 November, signed a ‘declaration of integration’ at Balibo with Indonesia.\textsuperscript{50} Later, on the same day, Adam Malik who arrived at Atambua to receive the counter-declaration addressed, “Diplomacy is finished. The solution to the East Timor problem is now at the front line of battle”.\textsuperscript{51} Exactly as what he said, diplomacy took a back seat and East Timor was fast turning into a full-fledged battleground.

\section*{The Indonesian Occupation}

Citing Balibo declaration as the ‘majority’s wish for integration’, Indonesia prepared for a major assault by sea and air on Dili. However, the operation was delayed for twenty-four hours

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} F. Hiorth, \textit{Timor: Past and Present}, James Cook University, North Queensland, 1985, p. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{50} \textit{The Canberra Times}, 3 December 1975.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
so as not to embarrass the American President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger during their two day official visit to Jakarta. It is viewed that Kissinger gave his blessing to the Indonesian plan, asking only that it be carried out ‘quickly, efficiently and (without the use of) our equipment’. As Hamish McDonald remarked, he was to be disappointed on all three counts.\(^\text{52}\) On being asked for reaction to the Indonesian invasion while arriving Hawaii, President Ford smited and said, ‘we’ll talk about that later’. His press secretary, Ron Nessen added, ‘the President always deplores violence, wherever it occurs’.\(^\text{53}\) Even three days prior to the invasion, former Prime Minister Whitlam on being asked about the would-be action of his government replied, “We would do absolutely nothing....... Now, that’s a blunt, truthful answer”.\(^\text{54}\) And Indonesia got a free pass for its action.

At 2.00 a.m. on 7 December 1975, the attack on Dili, code named *Operasi Seroja* (operation lotus), was launched with naval bombardments, and an aerial attack involving 10,000 troops from the elite forces of *kopassandha* as well as *Brawijaya* and *Siliwangi* divisions. The taking of Dili was a violent affair with Indonesian troops rampaging through the city streets, looting shops and homes and firing at random. The soldiers who landed started killing everyone they could find. There were many dead bodies in the streets. All we could see were the soldiers killing, killing, killing’, said East Timor’s former bishop Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopez.\(^\text{55}\) As one eyewitness recalls, “The Indonesians tore the crying children from their mothers and passed them back to


\(^{54}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 December 1975.

the crowd. The women were then shot one by one, with the onlookers being ordered by the Indonesians to count". Particularly, the Chinese Timorese were the favourite targets of selective killings, with the number crossing five hundred on the first day itself.

The Fretilin quickly escaped to the mountains with its army intact and more than 350 political prisoners from UDT and Apodeti. Among the prisoners, Major Maggioli Gouveia, the police chief, Victor Santa and Osorio Soares, the brains behind Apodeti, were included. The prisoners were taken to Alieu and were killed some weeks after the assault on Dili, reportedly on about 25 December by Fretilin. The wanton killing of these prisoners was without any justification. In Aileu, a place used to be for Tropaz (Portuguese elite military unit) training, the first mass grave of 3 by 3 meters wide and of 80 cm deep, was found with 50 dead bodies. Inside, there were 50 dead decayed bodies whose arms were still found tied with wire. There were no sign of bullets on the whole bodies of the victims, meaning that they likely had to undergo tortures before being thrown (alive) into the mass graves. According to Arsenio Ramos-Horta who was one a Fretilin captive in Aileu, the number of those murdered by the Fretilin in Conselho amounted to some 700 people. According to eyewitness Moniz Maia, an Apodeti member from Same who escaped from the Fretilin gunpoint by sheer luck, "watching the gruesome scene I could not stand any more. I walked towards the river cliff where my friends had fallen. I remembered clearly that a

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Fretilin who aimed his Mauser at me was Tome Sea Cole, while those who were shooting my friends besides him, were former sergeant Jose Alexander Gusmao and Antonio. This kind of exceptional behaviour of Fretilin is saddening and also, gave clue to its rivals.

However, as the Indonesian troops marched ahead, they were supported by heavy naval and aerial bombardment, coupled with incendiary bombs and toxic sprays. Their vicious and extreme crude activities continued too. With the slightest doubt the entire villages were slaughtered for supporting Fretilin. The particular villages like Remexio and Aileu, south of Dili, saw the carnage, with everyone over three years old was shot dead, as ‘they were infected with the seeds of Fretilin’. The troops were encouraged that they are fulfilling the cause of Jihad (holy war) against the communists. The entire Chinese population in Maubara and Luiquica, on the northwest coast, was killed.

The East Timor take-over proved quite costly to Indonesia. If Timorese refugees that J.S Dunn interviewed in January 1977 are to be believed, 3,000, and perhaps more than 5,000 Indonesians had been killed by the end of September 1976. Later a highly placed Indonesian source told Dunn that the losses were estimated at between 5,000 and 7,000 men. Also, innumerable loopholes of the Indonesian army came out open. The Indonesians were poorly supported logistically; Training was inadequate and

equipment insufficient. Paratroopers, intended to block the retreat of Fretilin forces by landing behind them, were parachuted on top of them with artillery jammed, and many shells failed to explode. Indonesian troops rapidly became demoralised. In one correspondent's words, there was 'no glory' to be had from the action. They were poorly paid and witnessed extensive corruption within their higher ranks.... As troops began to refuse to go out on patrol and complained that they were not receiving enough food, it was reported that divisions were being rotated as quickly as possible in their duties. Some soldiers may have been punished for their undisciplined behaviour, but this has not been made public. Evidence so far suggests that the military leadership has not had full control over its units, and that this has continued to be so until at least late 1982.

After the first and second waves of attack on 25 December, between 15,000 to 20,000 additional Indonesian reinforcements were brought into help in the pacification of the colony. The Fretilin army called Falintil, with 2,500 full time regular soldiers from the former Portuguese army, some 7,500 part-time militia and 20,000 reservists, proved to be a stubborn resistance force, with sophisticated NATO light issue weapons left behind by Portuguese. However, until the end of March 1976, the Indonesians referred to their own troops as 'volunteers', indicates their reluctance in admitting the aggression. While the Indonesian control was confined to major town and some villages surrounding

them, their interior movement was difficult and met with stiff resistance. Even, towards the last weeks of summer and approach of the rainy season, villages under Indonesians, such as Alas and Remexio were re-captured by Fretilin. These frustrations prompted the Indonesians to spread devilish carnage of the local population. Even the newly appointed governor, former Apodeti members Arnaldo Araujo, wrote to Suharto condemning the widespread killing. According to Lopez da Cruz, about 60,000 Timorese had been killed which he told to be ‘the revenge for Fretilin’s cruelty when it was in power’. According to the Catholic priests in Dili, this figure may reach 100,000.

The women and girls were the worst sufferers of the Indonesia atrocities. Female relatives of Fretilin fighters and members of Fretilin-affiliated women’s and student’s organisations were particularly at risk. Many were arrested and imprisoned, some in a section of the Hotel Tropical in the centre of Dili where they were physically abused (a favourite Indonesian method was the use of fierce ‘burning Kretak [clove cigarettes] on breasts, faces and bare flesh), and raped repeatedly by their guards. Six months after the invasion, over half were pregnant. The same pattern was repeated all over Timor in the villages and towns taken over by the Indonesian troops where young women and girls (some barely in their teens) were demanded to gratify their sexual lusts.

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Some personal testimonies of Michele Turner are painful indeed. One Chinese Timorese girl, Olinda, narrated to Ms. Turner with candour, finding her and her interpreter to be females.

"After they landed in Dili the Indonesians were looking for girls. They asked everywhere, 'where are the single girls? I want to marry', and this kind of thing. An uncle spoke Bahasa Indonesia, for trade with West Timor. They forced him to go with them to interpret. He came back and told how the Indonesians were raping Timorese women. His wife cut her long hair and was crying and crying and all of us girls were very frightened. Many younger girls pretended to be boys, cut their hair and wore tee shirts and shorts like a boy. Sometimes they dress like a boy but don’t look like a boy and soldiers touch to see if they are girls, put their hands there to feel if they are boys or girls. So they have to look dirty so soldiers don’t want to touch, wear dirty clothes, not comb their hairs, and not wear shoes. If they have breasts starting they wrap them around to flatten them. Many kids did this".70

Often abuse of power by the Indonesian military turned to be horrific. Torture was used from the very start, and the dreaded BAKIN interrogation rooms in Hotel Tropical in Dili and Hotel Flamboyan in Baucau were always full. These included beatings, cigarette burning, electric shock treatment, systematic cutting of skin with razor blades, the crushing of limbs, water immersion and the extraction of finger and toenails. Sometimes, these proceedings were watched by senior officers, one of whom Colonel (later General) Tjien dof Sahala Rajagukguk, a graduate of British

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Army Staff College at Camberley (1972-73) and subsequently Indonesian Ambassador to India, later drew up a manual detailing techniques for the extraction of information from prisoners and precautions needed when taking photographs of torture victims.\textsuperscript{71}

The United Nations Security Council passed resolution on 23 December 1975, calling Indonesia to withdraw its armed forces from East Timor. It considered Portugal as the legal administering power in East Timor. In the following years, the UN General Assembly passed motions reaffirming East Timor's right to self-determination and calling for negotiations between Fretilin and the Indonesian and Portuguese governments. The industrialised nations and many African, Asian and Latin American states voted with Indonesia against the motion. Many smaller states supported East Timorese independence along with the other former Portuguese colonies. However, since 1982 the motion was not resubmitted for debate because the UN Secretary General was charged with exploring avenues for a comprehensive settlement of the problem.

The 'Act of Integration' was fulfilled in Dili on 31 May 1976. The ministers of the Provisional Government in East Timor convened a Regional People's Assembly with 28 delegates signing a petition requesting President of Indonesia to accept the integration of the territory with Indonesia. Needless to say, all the chosen delegates were handpicked. On 7 June, the delegates from PGET and Regional People's Assembly flew to Jakarta to present the formal request to President Suharto. Indonesia decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission to the territory to ascertain the wishes of the East Timorese. Thus, General Amir Machmud, the Minister of

Home Affairs was sent. After this act, the Indonesian Parliament approved a bill of integration of July 15, 1976. The statute of integration was signed into law and formally promulgated by President Suharto on July 17.

**East Timor upto 1991**

The official Indonesian sources reported in January 1976 that Indonesian forces controlled a third of the territory. This was countered by Fretilin in April 1976, claiming to have controlled 80 per cent of East Timor by their forces. Although Indonesian forces encountered difficulty in consolidating their foothold outside the main towns, but a series of localised campaigns from September 1977 until early 1979, involving massive aerial bombardment of areas thought to be under Fretilin control led to the capture and surrender of many thousands of East Timorese.

However, the criticism of Indonesia's actions had been growing in Western Europe, Australia and the United States, fanned by reports of Indonesian atrocities which reached the West from Catholic Church sources and the Fretilin radio channel. In March 1977, sixteen months after the invasion, a US State Department spokesman estimated that only 200,000 of the 650,000 people could be 'considered in areas under Indonesian administration'.

A delegation of diplomats and journalists which visited East Timor in September 1978 at the invitation of the Indonesian government reported that, captured and surrendered

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East Timorese whom they had seen in ‘resettlement camps’ were evidently suffering from serious malnutrition.

The year 1978 was one of the most difficult years for the East Timorese liberation movement. The deliberate campaign of starvation, the relentless aerial bombardments and the destruction of the agricultural system brought untold suffering to the Timorese people. The former Fretilin President Xavier do Amaral was captured by Indonesian troops on 30 August. However, in the previous year, he was arrested by the Central Committee of Fretilin itself, allegedly for opening negotiations with the Indonesian army. The succeeding Fretilin President, Nicolau Lobato, a great fighter, was shot and killed by the Indonesian troops on 31 December 1978, after a six hour gun battle on Mount Maubisse led by units of Timorese Battalion 744 and troops under the command of Suharto’s future son-in-law, Lieutenant Prabowo. Lobato’s death was thought by Indonesian forces as the beginning of the end of Fretilin.

In March 1979, Indonesian authorities declared the end of Operasi Seroya (Operation Lotus) launched at the time of the invasion and announced that thenceforth East Timor would be fully under civilian administration. However, resistance to the Indonesian occupation persisted with continued reports of attacks by Fretilin on Indonesian outposts. To eliminate this resistance, Indonesian forces launched dry season offensives involving the construction of large number of population. The forced recruitment of the East Timorese population into ‘fence of legs’ operations began in April 1981 as part of the Operasi Keamanan campaign, in which East Timorese civilians were pushed in front of Indonesian troops advancing on Falintil position.
With growing Indonesian operations, the senior ranks of Falintil got thinned out. In 1981, the leadership of Fretilin was formally handed over to regional guerilla leader Jose Alexandre Gusmao, popularly known as 'Xanana'. By then, 80 per cent of Falintil troops were lost, together with 90 per cent of their weapons. All the Fretilin support bases had been destroyed and all lines of communication with the outside world cut making it impossible to channel information to supporters overseas. The first important step the Fretilin leadership took was to restore the links between the scattered Falintil units still capable of mounting attacks on Indonesian positions. Once these had been established, the pre-1979 military and political strategies were completely revised. Falintil units were now to function as highly mobile columns, continually moving from place to place. The new strategy adopted at the 1981 conference was remarkably successful. In March 1983, the Indonesian commander in East Timor, Colonel Purwanto entered into official negotiations with Xanana who demanded the unconditional withdrawal of Indonesian troops and UN-supervised provision for self-determination. Subsequently, a ceasefire was put into effect. The fact that Fretilin had been able to make such a come back from near total defeat within the space of three short years was a measure both of Xanana's exceptional political skills and the continued support of local Timorese population for the resistance cause.

The ceasefire, however, did not last very long, for in that same month of March 1983 General Benny Murdani who had been responsible for planning and commanding the 1975 invasion

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became commander-in-chief of Indonesia's armed forces. Famous for his merciless past oppressions, he gave a public threat to Fretilin to wipe out if it does not surrender. "This time, no more fooling around. We are going to hit them without mercy. If this call goes unheeded, the government will use its armed forces and all its arsenal to clean up the remnants of Fretilin rebels," he said.\(^{75}\) With such a tough statement, large number of additional Indonesian troops were brought to East Timor in yet another operation *Operasi Sapu Bersih* (Operation Clean-Sweep) aimed at eliminating Fretilin.

The earlier 'encirclement' and 'annihilation' campaign had harmed population beyond imagination. The international human rights organisations had reported variety of sources of 'disappearance' and arbitrary killing of non-combatants, of torture and ill-treatment of people taken into custody of Indonesian forces including their detection in cruel and inhuman conditions, and of imprisonment without change or trial of people most often held on suspicion of opposing Indonesian occupation. Several Timorese had been executed or disappeared and the Indonesian offensive drove thousands out of the bush and down from mountains. The Amnesty International specifically complained about four types of human rights abuses, such as, limitation of access, detention and resettlement, torture and extra judicial execution, and disappearances.\(^{76}\) The Asia Watch Report compared East Timor with the Pol Pot's Cambodia and Idi Amin's Uganda as far as it became an international symbol of mankind's seemingly unbounded capacity to inflict horrors upon itself.\(^{77}\) Let alone the

\(^{75}\) *Sinar Harapan*, Jakarta, 17 Aug. 1983.


human rights group, a lay visitor to the territory would have
discovered the extent of this inhuman condition of the East
Timorese in a simple trip to the island.

Despite atrocities, the positive aspects of Indonesian
occupation can be highlighted. Before Indonesia took over East
Timor, Portugal, the previous colonial master had profited for
generations from sandalwood and coffee exports, but had done
little to better the lives of the Timorese. However, the dissident
East Timorese would also admit that since the invasion, Indonesia
had built roads and other infrastructures and improved education,
health-care and agricultural facilities. During the first decade, the
government had allocated more than US $450 million. For twelve
years until 1988, ‘special treatment’ was accorded to the province.
With regard to land transportation network, by the end of 1989,
more than 3,795 km of sealed roads, hardened earth roads and
gravel roads have been built. Sea and air transportation facilities,
the phone line through satellite system, diesel generated electricity
plants, more than 136 km irrigation network have been
undertaken to cite a few.

As a main part of social welfare programme, educational
development schemes were launched, with 1,577 students and
civil servants provided scholarships to study in universities in
Java, Bali, Sulawesi and other places; and also, the establishment
of a private university had been done. In public health sector,
there had been good progress too. Despite Indonesia’s best effort
towards East Timor’s development, the Timorese were dissatisfied.
‘It is not a matter how many bridges, roads and schools Indonesia
builds. The Timorese people need to keep their culture and beliefs
and their souls', Bishop Belo once said. Perhaps what Bishop Belo meant was the growing 'Indonesianisation' of East Timor. The educational development policy was intended, as was alleged, to inculcate in the East Timorese a sense of their belonging to the greater Indonesian 'nation'. The medium of education was Indonesian. On deeper inspection, however, much of this 'development' had more to do with the security requirements of the army and the demands of the local administration than with the needs of the local Timorese population. The economic reality was that, due to the monopoly of trade industry by the military elite, the profit went to their pockets.

What the clinics and, increasingly, the schools did serve was the influx of 'transmigration' — those officially encouraged to relocate from more crowded islands, and economic migrants from around Indonesia. By 1998, it was widely estimated that more than 150,000 non-East Timorese lived in East Timor with up to two-thirds of them centred on the capital of Dili. They were coming at the rate of 25,000 per year. The transmigration and forcible birth control of Timorese women through sterilisation appeared to go hand-in-hand. Non-Timorese were given preference in administrative jobs to Timorese having the allegation that the later were lazy in work. Even, business and property once owned by the Portuguese citizens were taken over by Indonesians.

78 Geoff Spencer, 'Development Efforts Fail to Calm Timor', Bangkok Post, 2 December 1994.
In mid-June of 1988, the governor of East Timor Carraascalao asked President Suharto to declare the province an open territory. By ‘open’ he meant that visitors – at least from other parts of Indonesia – no longer required a special permit to enter and that, East Timorese could freely travel to other provinces. On 1 January 1989, the Indonesian government granted East Timor an equal status. Subsequently, the event of 12 October 1989 Pope’s visit to Dili was a great occasion for the Timorese, even at the cost of brushing aside the Portuguese President’s repeated pleas to Pope to skip East Timor in his visit. As is well known, the Pope usually kisses ground when visiting a new country. However, the Pope’s gesture of not kissing the ground upon the arrival at the airport of Dili might have been interpreted as recognition of Indonesia’s sovereignty over East Timor. At the end of the Mass at Taci-Tolu before the congregation of 100,000, a demonstration took place - supporting independence. The demonstration was beaten up by the police.

The Santa Cruz Massacre and its Aftermath

The scheduled visit of a parliamentary delegation from Portugal filled much enthusiasm with the youths of East Timor as an opportunity to present their cause, the first serious investigation to be allowed into the territory by the Indonesian military. However, on 27 October 1991, the mission was cancelled due to Jakarta’s objection to the inclusion of a Lisbon-based Australian journalist critical of East Timor affair. Tensions were

heightened in late October by a series of small but violent clashes between anti-integration and pro-integration youth groups and gang of thugs doing the job as the masked killer unit (ninja) believed to be supported by the security forces. On the night of October 28, clashes in front of Motael Church resulted in the death of a pro-integration youth and also, an anti-integration youth, Sebastiao Gomes, which sparked a huge protest.

On 12 November 1991, a group of mourners left Dili's Motael Church at around 7 am after a memorial mass for Sebastiao Gomes. As they walked their numbers grew, eventually reaching about 2,500, mainly with people aged between 14 and 25. The marchers had carried pro-Fretiilin flags and banners. Unfortunately, a military major in civilian cloth was stabbed in the melee by an unidentified assailant, while the former was trying to seize a Fretilin flag from a female demonstrator. Though only lightly wounded, the incident was the main cause for the outraged soldiers to attack demonstrators later at cemetery.

As a result, ten trucks of dead and dying were dumped at Wira Husada No. 4 Military Hospital in Dili. Few of the wounded survived long: some were crushed under the wheels of vehicles in the hospital compound, others stoned to death or forced to swallow paraformaldehyde pills, a lethal disinfectant normally used to kill insects. They died slowly and in agony from internal bleeding and heart attacks. Then, in the early hours of 13 November, all the electricity was switched off in Dili; and under cover of darkness, the bodies were removed, trucked out of the city and dumped in mass graves (already prepared before the aborted Portuguese visit). On 15 November, three days after the massacre, about 80 Timorese who had been captured after the massacre were blindfolded, bundled on to army trucks and taken to Be-
Musi, a well-known execution site on the western outskirts of Dili, where they were shot by firing squad. In all, it is estimated by the Lisbon-based Ecumenical Association, A e Paz Possivel em Timor Leste (Peace is Possible in East Timor), based on careful analysis of information collected in East Timor between November 1991 and February 1992, that 271 were killed, 250 missing, and 382 wounded.

This kind of massacre in East Timor was not uncommon in the past, but this time it was with difference. The proceedings of the incident had been filmed by a British journalist and the videotapes were smuggled out from Indonesia to be shown through television screens worldwide. It created a strong public opinion against the Indonesian action. It was the front-page news for days in Portugal, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand, and was widely reported elsewhere. What angered the human rightists more were the unrelenting statements of the Indonesian army. Theo Sjafei, the new commander installed in Dili, defiantly said, 'If something similar to the 12 November event were to happen under my leadership, the number of victims would probably be higher'.

The 12 November massacre was a watershed in the modern history of East Timor, as Amritsar (1919) and Sharpeville (1960) were in the history of British Raj in India and the White rule in South Africa. To the great tragedy of Indonesia, with the

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85 Interview in The Editor, Jakarta, 14 March 1992.

videotapes to prove, it could not deny this massacre as in the past occasions. Another foreigner, then in Dili, a New Zealand citizen of Malaysia-New Zealand parentage, Kamal Bamadhaj, was shot at the cemetery and died soon after.

In fact, the Dili incident showed two things to the international community. First, the Indonesian army would not hesitate in using brutal force against unarmed civilians. The second was that popular opposition to Indonesian rule in East Timor continued to be widespread. This in turn reflected the new policy on the part of Fretilin under Gusmao to shieft the focus of its resistance against Indonesia, from direct armed conflict in countryside bac\: to the towns of East Timor through civil disobedience campaigns. But one thing is clear about the Dili massacre. When the world had assumed the East Timor conflict having almost pacified, with hardly any significant news of resistance, the Dili incident brought the issue to world centre stage once again like never before.

Amidst criticism, President Suharto appointed a distinguished national-level commission composed of both civilians and military officers headed by Supreme Court Judge Djaelani. The Army Chief-of-staff, the respected General Edi Sudradjat appointed a Military Honour Council to investigate the details of military's involvement. The council was chaired by Major General Feisal Tanjung, viewed as a highly professional and honourable officer, whose lack of political ambition made him beholden to few whose involvement might have proved embarrassing. The investigation resulted in court-martial against

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lower ranking officers and noncommissioned officers directly involved in the incident. It was the first time in ABRI’s history that senior military officers were held personally responsible for the misdeeds of subordinates, an extraordinary step that reflected a new emphasis on professionalism and accountability within military establishment. The Dili incident helped the army to have a self-analysis, and recommending certain changes. Thus it became a catalyst for reform in ABRI.

In the 90s, there was a substantive change in Fretilin’s approach to struggle under the initiative of its leader Xanana Gusmao. Fretilin strengthened contacts with young Timorese in the cities, especially in Dili, and launched a policy of non-violent resistance. Gusmao moved to Dili in 1991. It was from Dili that he led the civil disobedience campaign. Dili, being a high risk place and then, betrayed by an informer, Xanana was arrested on 20 November 1992. He was initially sentenced to life imprisonment, but due to international pressure in 1993 it was reduced to 20 years.

Two years after the arrest of Gusmao, on 12 November 1994, twenty-nine East Timorese students entered into the United States embassy compound in Jakarta when the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting was going on in Jakarta, and attended by President Bill Clinton among others. This embarrassed Indonesia’s status among the APEC members and having particularly angered President Suharto. During a post-APEC bilateral meeting with Suharto, President Clinton was reported to have told forcefully on the issue of human rights in East Timor. Similar views had already been expressed by Secretary

of State Warren Christopher after arriving in Jakarta for the summit on 11 November.

The East Timorese saw another occasion when their issue acclaimed international recognition. The Nobel Committee decided to award the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize jointly to Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximens Belo and Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta. The Nobel Peace Prize nevertheless gave additional respectability and drew world attention to the East Timorese cause. The Republic of Indonesia refused to congratulate Bishop Belo on his award and even, no representative of the government had graced the award-giving ceremony in Oslo. On his return to East Timor, about 200,000 people (almost one third of the total population) had gathered at the Dili airport to greet Belo. Even the Pope had attracted only 100,000 people in 1989. Ramos-Horta, the other recipient who had been denied entry into Indonesia since 1975, had taken Portuguese citizenship, but often stayed in Australia. Ramos-Horta said that the award should really have gone to the East Timorese freedom fighter Gusmao. This was the history so far of an island which was to come to more global attention in the coming years.

This 'introduction' part sketches the brief history of East Timor with the beginning of the Srivijaya Empire during the eighth century and the Majapahit Empire of 15th century, East Timor's five hundred years of Portuguese association and colonialism, the brief Japanese occupation during second world war, the two years of stormy political developments during the mid-seventies, and finally, the Indonesian take-over of the island. The protest by the East Timorese against the occupation has also been mentioned.

The long years of Portuguese colonialism and the popular resistance against the Indonesian occupation, plus the role of the
independence-seeking elite and their organisations involved had necessarily filled a common sentiment within the East Timorese, which helped in the growth of primordial East Timorese ethnic identity formation. The next chapter will study the various formative stages of the East Timorese nationalism and the fundamental aspects, including the role of religious organisation in realisation of this. Was there any abstract idea called 'East Timorese ethnicity' before? If not, then how did it originate and what were the factors behind its growth and maturity is indeed an exciting case to be studied. The theoretical approach to visualise the problem will be maintained.