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THE AUTHORITARIAN TEMPTATION IN EAST TIMOR

Nationbuilding and the Need for Inclusive Governance

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Abstract

Three political arenas in East Timor are examined regarding the goal of consolidating peace: governance under Fretilin leadership, the issue of official languages, and the security sector. The article finds that inclusiveness, transparency, and efforts to minimize conflict are lacking in current policies and political processes.

Keywords: East Timor, nationbuilding, peacebuilding, security sector reform, military intervention

In contrast with cases such as Kosovo or Afghanistan, the absence of deep, pervasive ethnic divisions in post-1999 East Timor might suggest that statebuilding in that country would be relatively straightforward. However, while its population is still traumatized and wary about political disagreement after the civil war that followed the end of Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, and the subsequent Indonesian occupation that ended only in 1999, East Timor is experiencing increasing tension along a number of fault lines.[1]

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1. This article was finalized in spring 2005 (field interviews were conducted early 2004) and covers developments up until that time. One year on, violence and political struggle have brought

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Calls for renewed dedication to "national unity" are being disregarded by the Fretilin government. As the United Nations scales down its operations there, the case of East Timor highlights the limited leverage available to international efforts at promoting inclusive governance.

This article starts from the assumption that nationbuilding—understood as (re)building a sense of community within a polity—can contribute toward peacebuilding in a post-conflict situation.[2] The focus here is not on the indisputable progress in reconstruction made in many areas thanks to international and local efforts. Rather, from a nation-building perspective, the article surveys a number of issues that remain divisive in East Timorese politics. Policy choices and political processes are examined for their contribution to the goal of consolidating peace.

The formal institutions of democracy are now in place in East Timor. Democracy provides opportunities for nonviolent conflict management; conversely, policies of inclusion and compromise may contribute to the rooting of democracy in a country. This article, however, will argue that a rules-based political order is still largely lacking in East Timor. The government's readiness to impose controversial policies serves to perpetuate this situation—arguably reinforcing existing social divisions. This is the situation in the wake of the May 2004 transfer of competences from UNMISET (the U.N. Mission of Support in East Timor) to the Timorese authorities and the May 2005 transformation of UNMISET into UNOTIL (the U.N. Office in Timor-Leste). At this point the U.N. is left in East Timor with only a few dozen advisers and (contrary to the recommendation of Secretary-General Kofi Annan) no security backup force, plus a mandate limited to supporting the capacity development of critical state institutions.

East Timor back in the international news headlines. What triggered a destructive chain of events was the government's dismissal, in March 2006, of some 600 of the army's 1,400 troops. The soldiers had been on strike over work conditions and claimed they were discriminated against because they came from the west of the country. In April a demonstration turned into violent clashes involving the former soldiers and splintering military and police forces. Over the following weeks, the crisis escalated into large-scale riots, with mobs burning and looting in Dili and elsewhere. By late June, it was reported that 150,000 people had fled their homes and more than 30 had been killed. International military troops (the majority from Australia) arrived in May, at the request of the government, and the situation appeared to be slowly calming. On May 31, President Xanana Gusmão declared a state of emergency and took control over army and police forces. On June 26, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri stepped down, amid claims that he knew Minister of Internal Administration Rogério Lobato had distributed weapons to civilians (Lobato had resigned on June 1 and was later placed under house arrest). On July 10, Nobel Prize laureate José Ramos Horta—who had resigned as foreign minister on June 25—was sworn in as East Timor's new prime minister. Although these developments may be traced back to one event, they cannot be understood outside the broader context of confrontational governance and flawed security sector reform examined in this article.

2. While nationbuilding is here seen as relating directly to citizens' identity, statebuilding encompasses activities such as the building of political institutions, strengthening of civil society, and holding of elections.

The article opens with an introductory section outlining key dimensions of the deep societal transformation that took place during the 1975–99 Indonesian occupation. A subsequent section develops a broader argument about the Fretilin (Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente, Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) government's way of conducting politics, arguing that there is a pattern of confrontational and self-preservatory governmental behavior that is detrimental to the adoption of democratic principles within the polity. Against this backdrop, the article addresses an issue that many observers have feared could ignite unrest in East Timor—the choice of Tetum and Portuguese (and not Bahasa Indonesia) as official languages. The study then addresses the most acute questions for internal security in East Timor: the tense relationship between the army and police and the challenge posed by disgruntled veterans of the resistance.

Impact of the Occupation: Unity and Altered Dividing Lines

The societal transformation that took place in East Timor during the Indonesian occupation is remarkable, testifying both to the strength of the resistance and the power of the Indonesian influence. One factor in this transformation was the rapid growth in the strength of the Catholic church in East Timor. In 1973, only 27.8% of the population were professed Catholics. By 1989, this had grown to 81.4% and by 1999 to some 90%.[3] The number of conversions testifies to the role the church achieved as a focal point for opposition to the occupation. Besides marking a difference from mostly Muslim Indonesia, conversions were inspired by the opposition role played by church leaders such as Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, who refused to stand idle in the face of the oppression and violence he witnessed. In the same way that the worldwide church shifted in the 1960s away from Latin to using local languages in liturgy, the church in East Timor began to conduct its services in Tetum. In turn, this language became a focal point of patriotism. At the same time, Indonesia's investments in education made a lasting impression on East Timor's young population. Many schools were built during the occupation, and large numbers of students received university degrees from Indonesia. At the end of Portuguese rule in 1975, the literacy rate was 10% and the capital, Dili, had only two schools for lower secondary education, compared to 103 in 1994.[4]

3. George J. Aditjondro, *In the Shadow of Mount Ramelau: The Impact of the Occupation of East Timor* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Indonesian Documentation and Information Center [INDOC], 1994), p. 69.

4. Figures quoted in Gavin W. Jones, "East Timor: Education and Human Resource Development," in James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares, eds., O*ut of the Ashes: Destruction and Reconstruction of East Timor* (London: Hurst, 2000), p. 44.

Differences in perceptions of the occupation's impact are a prominent feature of East Timorese society today. From those who left for exile in 1975 and returned in recent years, one is most likely to hear an across-the-board condemnation of the experience of occupation. Curiously, perhaps, people who lived through the occupation will generally give a more nuanced picture of the 24-year period. For one thing, they understand the scope of the resistance, which consisted of more than just fighters and politicians in exile: many people suffered greatly, among them human rights workers, church members, and youth activists—both in East Timor and Indonesia.

An important aspect of this history is the positive view many Timorese still hold of Indonesians. In Dili and around the country, billboards carrying paternalistic messages from the former Indonesian authorities are still standing. Many Timorese enjoy watching Indonesia television soap operas. During the occupation, resistance leaders themselves encouraged the Timorese to maintain a distinction between Indonesian people and the political regime in Jakarta. Fernando de Araujo, a prominent resistance leader, explained how meeting with a human rights lawyer in Jakarta during the occupation opened his eyes to the sacrifices being made by Indonesians as well: "Such experiences led us to urge the Timorese to see that their enemy was the occupying forces, not the ordinary Indonesian."[5]

Beneath these developments lie the deeper psychological effects of the many years of war. Recent decades have caused severe trauma to the Timorese people, and this has an impact today on levels of trust, ways of solving disputes, and the use of violence. Such problems cannot be addressed merely by externalizing them, that is, by blaming them on Indonesia. The Indonesian occupation was preceded in 1975 by a short but bloody civil war, the wounds of which still exist, and the occupation prevented discussion of this war. In late 2003, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação, CAVR) arranged a four-day public hearing on internal political conflict, which was broadcast live. "It hit a raw nerve. People fear that national unity is not so strong," said one consultant working for the commission.[6]

After the disastrous summer of 1999 amid the struggle for independence, East Timor has seen the emergence of a highly diverse group of actors existing side by side for the first time: fighters have come out of hiding, the diaspora has returned to East Timor, and political actors of different shades are competing for influence, all in the new setting defined by independence and unprecedented international exposure. Within this context, there are competing efforts to define the character of the new East Timor. For the government, dominated

5. Author's interview with Fernando de Araujo, Dili, February 2004.
6. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

by exiles who have returned, education and other arenas now serve as venues for neutralizing Indonesian influences and filling the new state with a cultural content that is both Timorese and Portuguese.

Two important reflections of the traumas suffered by East Timorese society are the widespread wariness about any signs of internal conflict and the wish for national unity. During the struggle against the Indonesian occupation, "national unity" grew to become a key strategic element. In December 1987, Xanana Gusmão, leader of the pro-independence guerilla force Falintil (Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste, Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor), adopted a more inclusive strategy, setting up the National Council of Maubere Resistance (Conselho Nacional de Resistência Maubere, CNRM) in order to restructure the movement on broader, non-partisan lines. In turn, Xanana resigned from Fretilin; Fretilin abandoned its claim to be the only legitimate representative of the Timorese people; and Falintil, the armed wing of Fretilin, was reconstituted as a non-partisan, national force.[7]

In 1998 the CNRM was reestablished as the National Council of Timorese Resistance (Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense, CNRT), again under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, with a similar goal of non-partisan inclusiveness. That same year, a Fretilin conference adopted a program that included support for a government of national unity for the first five years of independence.[8] At the second CNRT congress, in August 2000, a Pact of National Unity was unanimously adopted. Whereas the U.N. Transitional Adminstration (UNTAET) continued to address the CNRT as its main counterpart, Fretilin and the Timorese Democratic Union (União Democrática Timorense, UDT), and later other parties, would soon splinter off, leaving the CNRT as an umbrella gathering smaller parties around the charismatic leadership of Xanana. One year later, on July 8, 2001, 14 of East Timor's 16 registered political parties signed a new "Pact of National Unity." The ceremony, attended by East Timor's key political figures and an audience of 15,000 people, played an important role in the civic education process prior to the Constituent Assembly elections. The pact obliged signatories to support, respect, and disseminate the principle of nonviolence and unconditionally to accept the results of the U.N.-administered referendum of August 30, 1999 (where 78.5% had voted for independence from Indonesia). It also laid out a set of principles related to the Constituent Assembly elections, among them respect for the outcome.[9]

When independent East Timor's first government was sworn in, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri identified the creation of a new basis of national unity as an

7. Pat Walsh, "East Timor's Political Parties and Groupings," Australian Council for Overseas Aid, briefing notes, April 2001.

8. Ibid.

9. "Marching Toward a Peaceful Election," in *TaisTimor* (Dili), 2:29, August 2001.

important goal: "In the past, national cohesion was built upon opposition to the occupant. Today it must be built around the goal of reconciliation and social justice."[10] This would not be the last word on national unity, however. Arguing that Alkatiri had already abandoned the ideal of inclusive and meritocratic government in forming the first Council of Ministers, the scholar Dennis Shoesmith has concluded that "it is doubtful that the Fretilin leadership could ever accept as legitimate a government formed by their political opponents on the right."[11] By that time, political and intellectual actors not associated with Fretilin had already tried to dissociate the issue of statehood from Fretilin specifically and had identified a number of issues for which sections of the draft constitution would weaken national unity. Proceedings from one debate on the draft listed the following: naming the state the "Democratic Republic of East Timor" would suggest associations with autocratic "democratic republics," proclaiming November 28 alone as independence day would represent only one party (Fretilin), the use of the term "Maubere people" (traditionally representing the east of the country) would encourage tribal conflicts, and the proposed flag would only represent Fretilin.[12]

At present, the concept of national unity crops up regularly in statements by the parliamentary opposition, which accuses Fretilin of being exclusive and abusing its powers. While the response from Fretilin and its supporters—that politics in East Timor have merely become "normalized" and the opposition is out of power and therefore envious—may not be entirely unreasonable, the discussion above should demonstrate the continued relevance of the concept of national unity.

Divisive Governance: Favoring Fretilin

While plans for institution-building are being implemented more or less according to schedule, questions may be raised about *content*: whether the actual political practices that emerge from the new institutions are conducive to national unity and the rooting of democracy in East Timor. Although many political theorists have argued that presidential systems are more inclined toward "winner takes all" outcomes that can be detrimental to social stability, the case of East Timor testifies to the importance of local specifics: here, it is first and foremost President Xanana Gusmão who has gone to great lengths in efforts to pacify political relations. Prime Minister Alkatiri and his government, on the

10. Quoted in Dennis Shoesmith, "Timor-Leste: Divided Leadership in a Semi-Presidential System," in *Asian Survey*, 43:2 (March/April 2003), pp. 242–43.

11. Ibid., p. 235.

12. Paulino Guterres, Marcelino X. Magno, Estanislau de Sousa Saldanha, and João Mariano Saldanha, "Debate on Constitutional Draft: Positive, Negative, and Implications for East Timor, Proceedings," Dili, East Timor Study Group (ETSG), February 20, 2002, pp. 11–12.

other hand, have on numerous occasions acted to alienate non-Fretilin actors in a way that the country can ill afford.

By late 1999, the CNRT was the hub of politics in East Timor, and the program of national unity as promoted by Xanana turned the CNRT into UNTAET's preferred counterpart. However, the CNRT was not able to hold on to all of its members for long. Fretilin's leaders were impatient to campaign for the August 2001 Constituent Assembly elections and realize the potential of their organizational network. Winning 57.4% of the vote, and 12 of the 13 single-seat constituencies, Fretilin ended up with a majority of 55 of the 88 Assembly seats. Part of Fretilin's success can probably be explained by confusion among the voters: many believed that Fretilin was Xanana's party. In fact, he did little to endorse the party and was deeply disappointed upon learning of its success.

Soon after the elections, the process of drafting a constitution began. Public consultation was swift: the final version was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on March 9, 2002. In the consultation process, two crucial decisions were made. The powers of the president were circumscribed, so as to create a semi-presidential rather than a fully presidential system. And instead of fresh elections being held for the new Parliament, officials decided that the Constituent Assembly would change gears and serve as the legislature for the next five years.

A consequence of this decision was that East Timor failed to witness a continuation of inclusive party politics. Those who remained under Xanana's umbrella were considered to be "everybody else," a default political category that could not match Fretilin, despite Xanana's personal popularity and his decisive victory in the April 2002 presidential election.[13] Said one long-term international observer in Dili, "The one surprise in East Timorese politics has been Fretilin's success in turning back the clock. . . . They kept themselves intact and when more power came into Timorese hands, they grabbed it."[14] As it gradually dawned on other political parties that they would remain by and large without political influence at least until the 2007 elections, frustration grew to high levels. By late 2001, opposition actors turned to UNTAET, asking for new elections. But in the view of a senior UNMISET official, "We gave them the picture, and showed them that holding new elections would be very difficult. . . . None of the parties pressed it further."[15] On January 31, 2002, 65 of 88 representatives voted to turn the Constituent Assembly into East Timor's first legislature.[16] Criticism from the opposition about the non-

13. Gusmão garnered 82.7% of the ballots cast in the election on April 15, 2002.

14. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

15. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

16. *UNTAET Daily Briefing*, January 31, 2002. An archive of UNTAET Daily Briefings is available at <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/DB/DB-2.htm>.

elections has not gone away. Much of the explanation for this is to be found in the deep frustration felt by the opposition over its own political impotence. Expectations were probably different in March 2002, when only 14 assembly members voted against the Fretilin draft constitution. "They were fairly bitter, an indication, in my view, of the opportunities for a more inclusive legitimizing process which were perhaps lost," wrote the scholar Anthony J. Regan.[17]

At present, the opposition is easily bypassed in Parliament. The government originates most, if not all, legislative initiatives, and the Fretilin majority votes homogeneously in support of its government. In October 2003, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported that East Timor's Parliament had adopted 16 laws since the restoration of independence; most had been "received from the Government and . . . [had] undergone little substantive change within the legislature." Furthermore, the government had issued 21 decree-laws (official orders carrying the force of legislated law), and the president, 10 presidential decrees.[18] The opposition's resentment of Fretilin's exclusivist way of doing politics is increasingly shared by other actors, in particular the young, educated intelligentsia.

Critics point to both specific policies and the way in which they were implemented, in order to illustrate what they do not like about Fretilin's way of doing politics. One piece of legislation that has caused much resentment is the 2003 Immigration and Asylum Law. A consortium of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pointed to a number of examples of "anti-constitutional and anti-foreigner attitude" in the bill;[19] an international watchdog organization found that the provisions of the law would "violate human rights guarantees of citizens, foreigners residing in East Timor, and asylum seekers."[20] In July 2003, President Gusmão vetoed the law and sent it back to Parliament for further consideration after the Court of Appeal had found unconstitutional two of its articles. For his part, Prime Minister Alkatiri pledged that "not a comma" would be changed in the bill.[21] Despite opposition, the law was passed in September 2003.

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17. Anthony J. Regan, "Constitution Making in East Timor: Missed Opportunities," in Dionisio da Costa Babo Soares, Michael Maley, James J. Fox, and Anthony J. Regan, *Elections and Constitution Making in East Timor* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 2003), p. 40.

18. Report of the Secretary-General on the U.N. Mission of Support in East Timor, United Nations Security Council, S/2003/944, October 6, 2003.

19. See "Article-by-article Commentary on the Immigration and Asylum Bill," NGO Working Group to Study the Immigration and Asylum Bill, Dili, May 13, 2003, <http://www.jsmp.minihub.org/Legislation/LegEng/NGO24Visa_law05commentary03final.pdf>.

20. Judicial System Monitoring Program, press release, Dili, October 1, 2003, <http://www.jsmp.minihub.org/News/News/1_10_3E.htm>.

21. As reported by *ASAP East Timor News Digest*, no. 17 (2003), <http://www.asia-pacific-action.org/southeastasia/easttimor/netnews/2003/end_17v2.htm>.

Observers were no less critical of a draft Law on Freedom, Assembly, and Demonstration, passed by Parliament in December 2004. The law features sections that require prior notification for demonstrations and prohibit "demonstrations whose objective constitutes contempt of the good reputation and respect due to the Head of State and other officeholders of the State institutions." These and other laws were described by Human Rights Watch as being aimed at insulating public officials from criticism. Both Human Rights Watch and several local NGOs stated that the provisions violated both international law and the East Timorese Constitution.[22] In a separate case, Alkatiri in February 2005 announced a government boycott of *Suara Timor Lorosae*, East Timor's biggest newspaper, after it reported alleged deaths from famine in Ainaro District. Alkatiri, who claimed the report was untrue, also tried to have the newspaper evicted from its offices, resulting in protests from Timorese and international journalist organizations.[23] An earlier, powerful example of Fretilin's willingness to steamroll through its decisions was the appointment in February 2003 of new administrators at the subdistrict level. Among the 65 appointed, as many as 62 belonged to Fretilin. Concerns that this signified a politicization of the administrative system—expressed among others by the U.N. secretary-general[24]—were dismissed by Alkatiri.[25] The appointment was a hurried process, managed by Minister of Internal Administration Rogério Lobato. "It was his gift to the government," said one senior UNMISET official, "and I can't say the government was upset about it."[26]

In a report published in spring 2004, the U.N. secretary-general warned that regardless of progress made, "promotion of a culture of free political dialogue will remain essential" if East Timor is to derive full benefits from the democratic institutions and procedures that are being established there. The report emphasized the importance of "greater clarity concerning the activity that is permissible for public servants."[27] Despite qualms they may have about Fretilin's politics and developments within the civil service, UNMISET and other multilateral and bilateral actors continue to invest heavily in the state apparatus: good governance is essential for tackling the enormous tasks ahead. This

22. "East Timor: New Law Aims to Stifle Political Dissent," Human Rights Watch (HRW), press release, London, December 29, 2004. Law excerpt as quoted by HRW.

23. "Government Harasses Daily Newspaper Suara Timor Lorosae," Reporters Without Borders, press release, March 3, 2005.

24. Report of the Secretary-General on the U.N. Mission of Support in East Timor, United Nations Security Council, S/2003/449, April 21, 2003.

25. UNMISET Local Media Monitoring, May 2, 2003. (UNMISET Public Information Office, Dili).

26. Author interview, Dili, February 2004.

27. Report of the Secretary-General on the U.N. Mission of Support in East Timor, United Nations Security Council, S/2004/333, April 29, 2004.

particular assistance, however, also has political implications: the focus on administration and management also empowers the government in relation to the opposition. One interesting United Nations Development Program (UNDP) project addressed this imbalance directly (and caused irritation in the government). The Ministry of Finance, by far the largest recipient of assistance, by early 2004 employed some 80 international consultants. With a view to strengthening the capacities of the parliament's budget committee, which is dominated by opposition parties, UNDP hired a consultant to serve with the committee. "The effect was that we strengthened the role of debate as a tool for oversight," a UNDP official said.[28]

The government's top-down, non-inclusive way of doing politics combines with limited transparency and little tolerance for criticism to form a political culture that is not conducive to nationbuilding and the rooting of democratic practices in East Timor. The country has only recently come out of armed conflict and is still in many ways traumatized. According to Tanja Hohe's analysis of the 2001 elections, "Anything other than Fretilin in the political landscape seemed frightening to the people."[29] In a 2003 poll, as many as 45% of respondents said competition between political parties is a bad thing. Of those holding this view, 41% thought that such competition could cause riots or violence, while 15% said that competition would lead Timor back to civil war like that of 1975.[30]

In such a situation, society might be better off if the government pursued more inclusive policies. Pragmatic considerations might also point Fretilin toward inclusion. For one thing, the growing frustration among the opposition could undermine the development of a political culture in which different parties trust each other not to unduly exploit their hold on power and are ready to give up power if they lose an election. With its current power base and the fragility of new institutions, the ruling party has the ability to cast institutions in such a way as to make real political competition increasingly difficult.

Reconstructing Traditions: The Language Issue

It has frequently been predicted that the choice of official languages in independent East Timor will become a dangerously divisive issue. The Indonesian occupation of 1975–99 had a dramatic impact on East Timor's language situation: it underpinned Tetum as a language of national unity; more peculiarly,

28. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

29. Tanja Hohe, "Totem Polls: Indigenous Concepts and 'Free and Fair' Elections in East Timor," in *International Peacekeeping*, 9:4 (Winter 2002), p. 73.

30. "National Opinion Poll," International Republican Institute, East Timor, November 2003, p. 24.

perhaps, Portuguese—previously a language of oppression—also came to fill a role as a language of resistance. At the same time, the expansion of education led to a rapid rise in proficiency in Indonesian. These developments, along with the sudden appearance of English in 1999, are the key components of today's East Timor language situation, which is significantly more complex than it was in 1975, when Fretilin declared Tetum and Portuguese to be state languages. In December 2001, the Constituent Assembly voted by a majority of 80 out of 88 in favor of making Tetum and Portuguese official languages.[31] In the 2002 Constitution two other languages—Indonesian and English—are described as working languages. Today, the issue of official languages remains controversial. And as for positions in the debate, what actors say depends mostly on what they speak.

East Timor has as many as 16 indigenous languages. Twelve are of Austronesian origin. Among these are the different versions of a creolized contact language, Tetum (also written Tetun), which are spoken in three different regions of East Timor. It is the Dili version of Tetum that came to serve as a lingua franca for the East Timorese during Portuguese times.[32] Outside the areas mentioned above, Tetum is a second language (with the exception of certain smaller areas where Indonesian has that position). In 1980 the Catholic church began to conduct its services in Tetum. In turn, this language became a focal point for patriotism, and its use spread rapidly. In an effort to win hearts and minds, Jakarta introduced Tetum as a second language of instruction in East Timorese primary schools in 1990.[33] By 1998, the CNRT Congress voted to adopt Portuguese as East Timor's official language. Tetum would become a supplementary second language after five to ten years of development.[34]

Portuguese had been the language of instruction for the small Timorese elite who had received an education under Portuguese rule. During the Indonesian occupation, the language was being used for communication in the clandestine networks. Perhaps more important for today's language policies, key leaders spent their exile years in Portugal or former Portuguese colonies such as Mozambique. Lisbon's support for East Timorese independence also fostered a sense of indebtedness to and stronger affiliation with Portugal. However, the diaspora did not observe firsthand the multifarious socialization that took place during the Indonesian occupation. Many Timorese received an education during this period, and Indonesian was their language of instruction.

31. Agence France Presse, December 11, 2001.

32. This short outline of the linguistic situation in East Timor is primarily based on Geoffrey Hull, *The Languages of East Timor: Some Basic Facts*, Instituto Nacional de Linguística, Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, <http://laurel.ocs.mq.edu.au/~leccles/langs.html>.

33. Joseph Oenarto, "Can East Timor Survive Independence?" Canberra, ANU North Australia Research Unit, discussion paper, no. 17 (2000).

34. Pat Walsh, "East Timor's Political Parties."

Furthermore, Portuguese, and the diaspora's personal experiences in Portugal and its former colonies, meant little to those who grew up in East Timor during the occupation. Remarkably, Indonesian NGOs were successfully employed in the civic education process prior to the Constituent Assembly elections. An international leader of the process told the author, "We realized that, quite simply, Timorese enjoy working with Indonesians."[35] To further complicate the language issue, English arrived with the international military forces in 1999. Since then many Timorese have learned a bit of English, at least in Dili. As a result of this development, plus the appearance of satellite television and a few Internet cafes, some in East Timor have begun to advocate English as a better alternative than Portuguese.

Given these tremendous changes, the decision in 2001 to designate state languages was no longer simply a question of reviving policies adopted some 26 years earlier. Literacy rates had increased substantially and Indonesian was understood by 90% of the population under the age of 30, and 50% of those over that age.[36] Consequently, there was a serious generational dimension to the decision to make Tetum and Portuguese official languages while sidelining Indonesian. So far, predictions of major protests by disfavored Indonesian-speakers have not played out, although this could also reflect the government's limited ability to fully phase out Indonesian. Regan has called the language issue "potentially very divisive," adding that "access to political and economic power, depending on how this plays out, could be dominated very heavily by the language question."[37]

Behind the government's choice to phase out Indonesian lie several factors: a wish to retain and strengthen independence, an often dismissive attitude toward the Indonesian language, and the view that Portuguese is a "window to the world" while Indonesian is not. In the view of Minister of Education Armindo Maia, "Even if Tetum were very developed, we cannot use it for communication in another place. With my Portuguese I can understand 90% of Spanish and up to 50% of Italian."[38] A survey in 2001 found that as many as 91% of East Timorese understand Tetum and 58% can read it (compared to 54% for Bahasa Indonesia and 14% for Portuguese). Tetum was cited as their mother tongue by 43%; 57% cited a different local language. The poll revealed a sharp generational divide: 83% of East Timorese under the age of 25 can speak Indonesian, as opposed to only 27% of those over 50. Also, 27% of those aged 35–50 can speak Portuguese, versus only 11% of those under 25.[39]

35. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.
36. Joseph Oenarto, "Can East Timor Survive?"
37. Anthony J. Regan, "Constitution Making," p. 41.
38. Author's interview with Armindo Maia, Dili, February 2004.
39. *East Timor National Survey of Voter Knowledge (Preliminary Findings)*, Asia Foundation, Dili, May 2001, p. 70.

In 2001 the government set up a center of linguistics to develop a uniform Tetum language, but different styles of writing are still encountered.[40] The Timor Institute of Development Studies now publishes its newsletter in both English and Tetum, and every issue features a column on the uses of Tetum in writing. "We are not encountering significant problems in writing in Tetum," said institute director João Saldanha. "Yes, it is not 'mature,' but it's pretty good."[41] Linguist Geoffrey Hull, an expert on Tetum, has fiercely defended the utility of the language. Hull, whose works include a Tetum-English dictionary and a Tetum grammar, argued that a skeptical colleague had evidently not read "a Tetum newspaper, website, book, magazine, roadsign or, for that matter, the Tetum text of the national constitution."[42] "East Timor, as everyone not blinded and soured by pro-Indonesian and Anglocentric loyalties knows, needs both Tetum and Portuguese to be fully itself," wrote Hull.[43] Foreign Minister and Nobel Prize laureate José Ramos Horta defended the decision to make Portuguese and Tetum the official languages. He described Tetum—as opposed to Indonesian—as the real lingua franca of East Timor but added that "Tetum is still a rudimentary language—it still needs to be developed." Horta explained the choice of languages (and the decision not to choose English) by referring to the history, culture, and identity of the country, saying that "it was a strategic decision to strengthen the uniqueness of East Timor, the national identity of East Timor."[44]

Few other observers seem fully convinced that Tetum will grow to be as strong or versatile as Portuguese or Indonesian (or English)—or that it would be worth the investment to try to make that happen. From the government's side, far fewer resources are fed into developing Tetum than into teaching the population Portuguese. Since 2000, children starting primary school have been taught in Portuguese. No child who started school that year or later will be taught Indonesian, and every year a cohort of children who have learned Indonesian will leave school and be replaced by one taught in Portuguese. Or so is the government's intention: owing to a lack of teachers with competence in Portuguese, some schools still teach in Indonesian. Without a large number of teachers sent over and paid by Portugal, the effort to phase out Indonesian would have been close to impossible. When Indonesia pulled out in 1999, 80% of primary school teachers were Timorese and 20% were Indonesian. In secondary

40. Maia interview.

41. Author's interview with João Mariano Saldanha, Dili, February 2004.

42. Geoffrey Hull, "Portuguese Is Not Being Forced onto East Timor as the Official Language Despite Claims to the Contrary," *On Line Opinion*, September 22, 2002, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=1557>.

43. Geoffrey Hull, "The Final Words on the East Timorese Language Choices," ibid., October 11, 2002, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=1546>.

44. Comment made by José Ramos Horta, BBC News *Talking Point Forum*, June 12, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/forum/2026934.stm>.

education and above, however, the relationship was the opposite. And even among the Timorese teachers, 90% were teaching in Bahasa Indonesia, according to Maia.[45] The complexity of the situation becomes clear in many ways. In the schools, pupils suffer in other subjects because they and their teachers have a poor command of Portuguese; members of Parliament struggle because draft laws are presented in Portuguese; and similar problems occur in the training of judges, most of whom barely understand Portuguese.

There is no golden curriculum to resolve the conflictual linguistic and political-linguistic situation of East Timor. Bahasa Indonesia will not go away, given Indonesia's proximity and economic relevance. As the educational level of the population rises, English can be expected to become more prominent. What might have served national unity and nationbuilding better than the current policy of rigid emphasis on Portuguese (and half-hearted investment in Tetum) is a more pragmatic approach, acknowledging that Indonesian and English too will remain, and that all four languages have roles to play in the country.

Disunity in the Security Sector

Two major interrelated problems dominate East Timor's security-sector agenda: the antagonistic relationship between the military and police forces, and the issue of veterans from the struggle against the occupation. Several clashes between the military and police since 2002 underscore key questions on the loyalties and professionalism of these forces and the level of public trust they enjoy.

When INTERFET (the U.N. Sanctioned International Force in East Timor) intervened in September 1999, Falintil enjoyed a status of immense moral authority among the Timorese. However, despite Falintil's stature, INTERFET sought to disarm it. In the opinion of Edward Rees, who served as a political affairs officer to UNTAET's National Security Adviser, this decision—together with UNTAET's avoidance of the issue and an inability on the part of donors to aid an "illegitimate" armed force—saw Falintil become increasingly marginalized, and as discipline faltered, the force began to look like a security threat.[46] The new army, the F-FDTL (Falintil–Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste, East Timor Defense Force), was established on February 1, 2001, as Falintil was retired. Only when the first battalion of 650 soldiers was established did it become clear to many veterans that there would not necessarily be a place for them in the new army. UNTAET had earlier agreed that the hiring for the first battalion would be an internal Falintil matter. Consequently, those who were

45. Maia interview.

46. Edward Rees, "The U.N.'s Failure to Integrate Falintil Veterans May Cause East Timor to Fail," *On Line Opinion*, September 2, 2003, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=666>.

recruited were Xanana loyalists while others were left out on the basis of personal, ideological, or other incompatibilities. Importantly, UNTAET also did not consult with the disapproving Fretilin, which now controlled the government. Falintil veterans who were not hired found themselves targets of Fretilin advances. A particularly prominent figure in this game was Rogério Lobato. The brother of the late resistance leader Nicolau Lobato, Rogério served time in prison in Angola in the 1980s for diamond smuggling.[47] Back in East Timor, he became the head of the umbrella veterans' group Association of Ex-Combatants 1975 (AC75) and later, as minister of internal administration, East Timor's top police boss.

Controversy over recruitment also turned the establishment of the National Police (Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste, PNTL), into a divisive issue. UNTAET was in a hurry to get internal security up and running and decided it did not have time to build the whole force from scratch. Instead, a decision was made in early 2000 to hire some 340 policemen who had earlier served in the Indonesian National Police (Polisi Republik Indonesia, POLRI). "It was a very negative thing to do," according to a senior international police investigator, who also observed the POLRI during the summer of 1999. Assigned to assist the police on security matters, he found no interest whatsoever in his services: "They very rarely responded to a security incident, or if they did they would delay on purpose, taking hours to drive a kilometer to a scene."[48]

The decision to include POLRI was explained by a wish to bring experience to the new force. "But these people stood by and did not protect people in 1999—and so we have to ask about their commitment today," the investigator added.[49] Moreover, their earlier training and practice were a long way from the human rights focus emphasized in the training of the new forces. While the causes of the December 2002 riots are still disputed, an important reason the situation got out of hand was the crowds' anger at the police. In the view of a Dili-based journalist who covered the riots, "If police had been respected resistance leaders, it might have been a very different outcome."[50] Today, the police force is made up of some 2,900 personnel, which means that those who came from the Indonesian police make up a fairly small part. However, the problem may be greater than numbers alone suggest. Through a U.S.-instigated program of police training (ICITAP), ex-POLRI members were placed on a career fast track. After one month of training, they went into service, at a higher rank than did those completing the more lengthy education. One international police

47. "Freedom's Disappointments: Riots and Incursions Mar Nation-building," in *Economist*, March 20, 2003.

48. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

49. Ibid.

50. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

officer who trained the PNTL described how new, subordinate recruits both feared POLRI veterans and lacked respect for them as professionals: "When you don't take the time to cultivate the leaders with the right competence and attitudes, you end up with a force that is unstable and ridden with internal conflict. . . . With the PNTL, this went wrong from the start," she told the author.[51]

After independence, an old distinction between people from the east and west of East Timor, the Firaco (Firaku) and Caladi (Kaladi), has re-emerged, carrying a degree of political significance. The distinction—most often explained as stemming from Portuguese language and colonial "divide and rule" policies—has been adopted by the Timorese themselves. Indeed, even an academic paper described the Caladis as "more accommodating and less assertive compared to the Firacos, who are assertive, risk takers, and less tolerant."[52] The Firaco-Caladi relationship is probably best described as one of mild prejudice. The distinction lacks both sufficient intensity and sufficient clarity (there are several subgroups within each side, and diffuse boundaries) to be described as a serious ethnic fault line, although it has been found that the regional cleavage did influence voting behavior in 2001.[53]

As old internal rivalries resurfaced after independence, people in East Timor often made an issue of the fact that a large proportion of Falintil's leaders were from the east—Firacos. The implication, to some, is that people from the west contributed less to the struggle. Some actors have recently demonstrated a willingness to play this political card. In January 2004, 42 officers were dismissed from the F-FDTL, ostensibly on grounds of discipline problems. The officers themselves alleged that they were being discriminated against because they were not from the east. The episode had a particular backdrop: when the F-FDTL was created its senior commanders and most of the first battalion's recruits were drawn from Firaco districts. In the view of Dennis Shoesmith, "The core of the new defense force is identified, then, not only with the president and commander-in-chief, rather than the government, but with one ethnic collectivity rather than another."[54] When the second battalion was recruited in 2001, however, the issue of representativeness was high on the agenda. Said one international consultant with intimate knowledge of the process, "This time,

51. Author's interview, Oslo, December 2004.

52. João Mariano Saldanha and Francisco da Costa Guterres, "Toward a Democratic East Timor: Institutions and Institutional Building," East Timor Study Group, working paper, July 2, 1999.

53. Dwight Y. King has concluded that the cleavage influenced voting support for Fretilin (higher in Firaco) and for the Association of Timorese Social Democrats (Associação Social Democrática Timorense, ASDT) (higher in Caladi). See Dwight Y. King, "East Timor's Founding Elections and Emerging Party System," *Asian Survey* 43:5 (September/October 2003), p. 753.

54. Shoesmith, "Timor-Leste," p. 247.

policymakers bent over backwards to secure representation broadly across the country."[55]

Opportunities to facilitate peacebuilding and integration through a transparent process and emphasis on representativeness were lost in the creation of the new army and police service. One consequence is that these forces today are widely seen as politicized and loyal to different sides. Politicization has taken place along lines that may have been drawn as early as the 1970s. It is a dangerous development that has already caused serious conflict between the military and police. Interior Minister Rogério Lobato has been a particularly active player in this picture. He has pushed hard for more Falintil veterans (presumably loyal to himself) to be accepted into the PNTL.[56] Since early 2004, the government has been setting up a Special Police Force (SPF) of up to 500 men. Training is currently being conducted without U.N. participation, reportedly because the U.N. was unhappy about the selection of personnel, seeing them as too close to Lobato. One problem is concern that the SPF could slide out of democratic control and be used against political opponents. Lobato himself justified the creation of the SPF with the need to fight violent crime and terrorism: "I have no moral basis to send my agents to fight violent crime only armed with pistols, when they come with automatic rifles, M16, AR15, G3, Mauser, Kalashnikovs. . . . We have to fight them with proportional means."[57] For its part, the F-FDTL did not welcome the government's plans, suggesting that they were encroaching into army territory.[58]

Such suspicions are indicative of the high level of disunity in the security sector. In the field, discord has reached a level where F-FDTL and PNTL servicemen have clashed violently several times since 2002. Often such conflict has started over trivial matters. In a January 2004 incident blamed on brawling soldiers, members of the military and the police fought after a football match in Lospalos. The violence left the police station in ruins. Policemen fled to a nearby hospital where shots were also fired when soldiers arrived. Ten policemen were taken hostage but later released. When the fighting was over, seven were injured.[59]

These incidents are symptomatic of broader problems. President Gusmão, who dedicated much of his 2004 New Year address to the issue of PNTL–F-FDTL relations, said that in Lospalos, soldiers had started shooting irresponsibly, "as if they wanted to wage a war against PNTL and the population."[60] In

55. Author's interview, Dili, February 2004.

56. Shoesmith, "Timor-Leste," p. 250.

57. Author's interview with Rogério Lobato, Dili, February 2004.

58. Comment by FDTL Major Manuel Freitas, UNMISET Daily Media Review, June 27, 2003 (UNMISET Public Information Office, Dili).

59. U.N. police source, Dili, February 2004.

60. "Office of the President: End-of-year Message," as distributed by UNMISET, Public Information Office, December 31, 2004.

December 2004, F-FDTL officers with rifles attacked Dili's Becora police station, leaving seven PNTL members injured, three of them seriously. PNTL Commissioner Paulo Martens later explained that the incident had occurred because an F-FDTL officer was upset about having been given a traffic fine.[61] Besides reflecting the obvious weaknesses in organizational culture and discipline, such antagonisms may be explained first and foremost by the recruitment policies of the forces. F-FDTL personnel share other veterans' dissatisfaction over the hiring of POLRI, as well as the failure to absorb thousands of veterans into new employment. A certain east-west division is also present; the makeup of the police is weighted toward the Caladi.[62] Finally, there is scant respect in the military for the ability of the police to do its job professionally. A number of security incidents have escalated because of poor handling by the police, and fear and incompetence have implicated officers with a minimum of training in repeated human rights abuses such as firing into crowds, as happened most critically during the December 2002 riots. Intensified government efforts in 2004 to crack down on ex-combatant opposition groups have brought fear to several villages following excessive, indiscriminate police violence.[63]

Parallel to the conflict between the military and the police runs East Timor's other acute security problem, the presence of unofficial groups of Falintil veterans. These groups have become rallying points for disenchanted veterans who feel they have been denied their share of the "peace dividend": they were the Timorese who sacrificed for their country, went to the mountains to fight the occupiers, and lost out on chances to get an education and have a career. Since independence, thousands of these veterans have been turned down for jobs with the new army and police forces on grounds of age or physical condition, or simply because the new forces could not offer employment to all who applied.

The largest veterans organizations today are the Association of Veterans of the Resistance, headed by President Gusmão, and the Falintil Veterans Foundation, with army chief Matan Ruak among the leaders.[64] Beyond these two organizations is a web of groups whose size, origins, loyalties, ambitions, and methods are often unclear, and often worrisome. Edward Rees has identified an

61. UNMISET Daily Press Review, December 17, 2004 (UNMISET Public Information Office, Dili).

62. Douglas Kammen, "The Ignominious Transformation of 'Glorious Falintil': Civil-Military Relations, Security, and Identity in East Timor," forthcoming in Paulo Gorjão, ed., *Double Transition in East Timor: Consolidation of Sovereignty and Democracy* (Singapore: University of Singapore Press).

63. Jill Jolliffe, "E. Timorese Police Mimic Violence of Ex-Masters," *Asia Times*, January 28, 2004.

64. Shoesmith, "Timor-Leste," p. 248.

increase in the existence of paramilitary security groups that coincided with the establishment of the F-FDTL. Such groups were loosely connected in the AC75, headed by Rogério Lobato.[65] Until the day of independence, these groups challenged the legitimacy of the new armed forces, staging a series of veterans' marches across the country. These demonstrations in turn helped lift Lobato into the government as head of non-military security.[66] Dennis Shoesmith has described Lobato's maneuvers among veterans as efforts both to counterbalance Gusmão's Falintil loyalists and to strengthen his own faction within Fretilin against Prime Minister Alkatiri and his allies.[67]

Among the veterans' groups causing concern is Sagrada Familia (in Portuguese, Sacred Family) of Cornelio Gama (popularly known as "L-7"), claiming 5,000 supporters (mainly in Baucau District), with a quasi-religious profile fusing Catholicism and animism.[68] A group with similar religious content (but also known for extorting protection money from local populations) is the Colimau 2000, which operates near the border with West Timor.[69] Another group comprises former combatants from the Orsnaco Base in the mountains of Orsnaco, Ainaro District, led by Marcos da Costa. More than 1,000 ex-combatants are said to reside there, having set up agricultural cooperatives for subsistence.[70] A veterans' group of greater political significance is the CPD-RDTL (Conselho Popular pela Defesa da Republica Democratica de Timor Leste, Popular Council for the Defense of the Democratic Republic of East Timor).

When asked about the extent of unity in East Timorese society today, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Bishop Belo responded, "Indeed, there are different political parties. [But] only one group, the so-called CPD-RDTL, sings a different song."[71] Led by Antonio Aitahan Matak, this organization presents itself as something akin to a "real Fretilin." Set up in 1999 to restore the Democratic Republic of East Timor proclaimed by Fretilin in 1975, the CPD-RDTL does not recognize the legitimacy of the current government, the Constitution, or the U.N. presence.[72] Not all of the members of these various groups are necessarily

65. Edward Rees, "The U.N.'s Failure to Integrate Falintil."

66. Mark Todd, "East Timor's New Govt. Faces a Challenge from Rebels," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 4, 2002.

67. Shoesmith, "Timor-Leste," p. 249.

68. Alan Sipress, "East Timorese Struggling for Survival," *Washington Post*, October 8, 2003.

69. Jill Jolliffe, "East Timor One year On," *Asia Times*, May 20, 2003. Colimau 2000 in September 2004 announced that it would transform itself into a political party, calling itself the Democratic Party of the Republic of Timor. See UNMISET Daily Press Review, September 4–6, 2004 (UNMISET Public Information Office, Dili).

70. UNMISET Local Media Monitoring, September 18, 2003 (UNMISET Public Information Office, Dili).

71. Author's interview with Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, Baucau, February 2004.

72. "The U.N. Looks to Renew for One More Year," in *Asian Analysis*, March 2004, <http://www.aseanfocus.com/asiananalysis/article.cfm?articleID=720>.

actual veterans. Interior Minister Lobato himself asserted that the members of the CPD-RDTL, Colimau 2000, and Orsnaco were "just opportunists." "How can someone at the age of 20 years be considered a veteran?!" he said, alleging that the real brains behind the groups are actors within the Indonesian military seeking to destabilize East Timor.

Opinions differ on the best response to the challenge posed by the veterans' groups. Prime Minister Alkatiri has promised to neutralize them, and the government's tough line appears to be driven by him personally.[73] The legal grounds for such steps are not always clear. The lines between political and criminal activity are often blurry. The CPD-RDTL has issued identification cards, stating that the official ones are not legal, and prevented people from participating in the census. Stories of extortion and other abuses abound and at least some of them are true. The government speaks generally of such groups as "internal terrorists." However, while it is convenient to explain security incidents as provocations by militias, there is scant evidence to prove any such links.[74]

The government so far has failed to fulfill its promises to quell this challenge, which for most members of the groups involved is probably an expression of general disillusionment and despair. Indeed, the government's confrontational, indiscriminate reaction to the groups may well have bolstered rather than squelched them. "There is a tendency for the government to use violence towards these groups," according to CAVR Chairman Aniceto Guterres Lopez. "I am very worried about this; it could give rise to a new form of struggle against the government."[75] His concern was shared by Fernando de Araujo, leader of the eight-party opposition alliance in Parliament. In Araujo's opinion, a majority of the veterans are demanding recognition, not money or positions, but "this government has the mentality that it can solve everything by power and law enforcement."[76]

The seriousness of the veterans issue was driven home by several incidents in 2004. At the center of many of them was L-7, who appeared to play an increasingly important political role. After chaos broke out at a veterans' rally in July, it was rumored that L-7 had been shot by the PNTL. After a month in hiding, however, he returned to Dili and attended a meeting with President Gusmão. L-7 claimed that policemen had fired at him but missed and hit a companion. First among the veterans' demands were a reshuffle of state institutions, changes in the recruitment to PNTL, and the dismissal of Minister of Internal Administration Lobato.[77]

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73. Jill Jolliffe, "Rebels Threaten Timor Peace," *The Age*, January 24, 2004.

74. Kammen, "The Ignominious Transformation."

75. Author's interview with Aniceto Guterres Lopez, Dili, February 2004.

76. Araujo interview.

77. Jill Jolliffe, "Guerilla Veteran Returns in Triumph to Dili," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 24, 2004.

Several international institutions have acknowledged the security challenge posed by these groups and have taken steps to address their grievances in terms of recognition and reintegration opportunities. Gusmão personally has devoted much of his time to the veterans and the PNTL–F-FDTL issue. He remains the one leader who commands respect among veterans and soldiers and continues to insist that problems can and must be solved through dialogue. As a first step toward formal recognition of those who fought for independence, two presidential commissions tasked with registering veterans and ex-combatants completed their work in May 2004, having gathered some 37,000 questionnaires. However, methodological problems raise questions about the material collected; most significantly, a mere four questionnaires were received from women.[78] In lieu of solid data to identify the real veterans, reintegration programs are still only starting to be implemented.

Conclusions

The end of the Indonesian occupation led to the unraveling of wartime unity in East Timor. Internal divisions have become more visible and more politically salient. Pro-independence and pro-integration, resistance and diaspora, Fretilin and non-Fretilin—all the actors that have shaped recent East Timorese history are now engaged in the politics of this new country, which is striving to assert its independence and build democracy.

East Timor remains a post-conflict society, even if the occupier has left and independence has been achieved. Marked by civil war and subsequent occupation, a large part of the population expresses apprehension about political competition. Exclusionary policies and win/lose outcomes in political disputes would seem to be counterproductive in relation to the goal of (re)building national unity among East Timorese. Nevertheless, despite the sufferings this society has undergone—or possibly because of them—politics here are often of that sort.

After first outlining the meaning of the concept "national unity" and sketching aspects of the societal transformation that took place during the occupation, this article has examined developments in three political arenas of East Timor relevant to the goal of building national unity. A section on governance dealt with the establishment of the institutions of government and the divisive political process within these. A subsequent section discussed the language issue, predicted to become the most conflictual topic and a problem that is clearly more complex than official policy would have it. Finally, a section on the security sector showed how politicization of the military and police, and the government's confrontational handling of the Falintil veterans issue, created

78. Concerns over methodology were expressed in the Report of the Secretary-General, April 29, 2004.

two security problems that threaten to destabilize the country and put the democratic process at risk. The survey of these political arenas has demonstrated, worryingly, that many aspects of the current political process in East Timor clash with common recommendations for governance in post-conflict societies—to minimize conflict and emphasize inclusiveness and transparency. Tensions within the society may in part be ascribed to this situation.

While East Timor has the trappings of democracy, it lacks a culture in which conflicts are naturally dealt with through rules-based resolution mechanisms. One way to ameliorate this situation might be through a sustained international effort to cultivate a democratic political culture. In the words of a prominent UNMISET official: "This is a weakness in our efforts; we have not invested in this. Civic education has been treated like media relations—like a dressing put on the institutions. But if the culture is not created, the institutions will not last."[79] Taking these lessons on board, it is important that the international community does not leave East Timor alone in open waters.

79. Author's interview, Jakarta, March 2004.