

Pritchett's prediction: Australian foreign policy toward Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor, 1974-1999

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Pritchett's prediction:

**Australian foreign policy toward Indonesia's incorporation of
East Timor, 1974-1999.**

Miranda Alice Booth

A thesis in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy



School of Humanities and Social Sciences
CANBERRA

2017

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Indonesia is a territory of enduring strategic importance to Australia.¹ The territory is composed of 17, 000 islands that extend 5, 1000 kms between the Indian Ocean in the West and the Pacific Ocean in the East.² Indonesia sits astride Australia's northern offshore oil and natural gas installations, and spans major sea lines of communication and air routes in the Asia-Pacific.³

Indonesia's size and geography has dictated Australia's permanent interest in good relations.⁴ In 1971, the *Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy*, a guidance document prepared by the Department of Defence (DOD), warned that an unstable and hostile Indonesia would directly threaten Australia's security:

“Because of its geography, it is the country from or through which a conventional military threat to the security of Australian territory could most easily be posed.”⁵

Geography also dictated that a united, stable and friendly Indonesia could deter or impede a conventional assault against Australia. The assessment continued:

“A stable, cohesive and economically developing Indonesia, with which Australia enjoyed relations of close confidence, would provide depth to our defence and add considerably to our security.”⁶

Assessments that are more recent also recognise the importance of good relations with Indonesia to Australia. The 2016 *Defence White Paper* simply noted:

¹ *Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy – 1971*, dated March 1971. NAA: A5619, C470, Part 2.

² Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, Parliament of Australia, *Near Neighbours, Good Neighbours: An Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Indonesia* (2004), 2; Clinton Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the independence of East Timor* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2004), 4.

³ “Document 21. Attachment: Defence Significance of Portuguese Timor. Memorandum to Rogers, Canberra, 15 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor, 1974 – 1976*, ed. Wendy Way (Carlton South, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 81.

⁴ Paul Dibb and Richard Brabin-Smith, “Indonesia in Australian Defence Planning,” *Security Challenges* 3, no. 4 (2007): 67.

<https://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/Resources/Files/vol3no4DibbandBrabinSmith.pdf>

⁵ *Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy – 1971*, dated March 1971. NAA: A5619, C470, Part 2.

⁶ Ibid.

“A strong and productive relationship with Indonesia is critical to Australia’s national security.”⁷

A friendly and co-operative relationship with Indonesia has therefore been an enduring priority of Australia’s strategic policy. In 1973, Australia’s Ambassador to Indonesia, Robert Furlonger, emphasised the importance of good relations with President Soeharto’s New Order regime in Indonesia to Australia:

“Australia’s main interest is an Indonesia experiencing reasonable economic growth and a benign and stable government and pursuing policies of good relations with its neighbours. The Suharto government fulfils these criteria.”⁸

Australian Governments co-operated with Soeharto’s New Order Regime, to encourage Indonesia’s economic growth, political stability and friendliness toward Australia, and secure Australia’s defence interest. For these reasons, Australian Governments also supported Indonesia’s annexation and incorporation of East Timor between 1974 and 1999.

East Timor, a territory with a land area of 14, 974 square kilometres, occupies one-half of the island of Timor.⁹ East Timor (Timor) is located between Indonesia’s southern archipelago and approximately 700kms northwest of Darwin, Australia, in the oil and gas rich Timor Sea. The Australian Labor Party (ALP), led by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, was in power when a military coup in Portugal in April 1974, created the opportunity for an independent Timor in 1975. On 7 December 1975, Indonesia invaded Timor to prevent the success of the independence movement.¹⁰ In July 1976, President Soeharto signed a bill to incorporate Timor as the 27th province of Indonesia.¹¹

Despite overwhelming Indonesian military force, Timorese armed and peaceful resistance against Indonesian occupation continued for 24 years. The Indonesian Armed Forces (*Angkatan*

⁷ Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2016), 125.

⁸ “Dispatch from Furlonger, Jakarta, 19 January 1973,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 43.

⁹ Peter Chalk, *Australian Foreign and Defence Policy in the Wake of the 1999/2000 East Timor Intervention* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Publications, 2001), 30.

¹⁰ Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), *Chega! The Final Report of the Commission for Reception Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor* (Jakarta: KPG in co-operation with STP-CAVR, 2013), 1:206, <http://chegareport.net/Chega%20All%20Volumes.pdf>

¹¹ Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 213.

Bersenjata Republik Indonesia; ABRI) carried out frequent, large-scale military operations to eliminate the independence movement in Timor. Deliberate and indiscriminate violations of human rights accompanied Indonesia's military campaigns. One widely accepted figure suggest that 30% of the population, or at least 200, 000 Timorese, died due to causes directly or indirectly related to Indonesia's military occupation.¹² On 30 August 1999, the Timorese overwhelmingly voted for independence from Indonesia in a decisive referendum. ABRI immediately implemented a terror campaign of widespread violence, forced displacement and destruction to prevent Timor's transition to independence.¹³

A pro-Jakarta lobby dominated Australia's foreign policy toward Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. Senior policymakers established personal relations with Jakarta's political and military elite, furthered bilateral economic and military co-operation, and neutralised Australian public criticism of Indonesia. Sections of the media, academia and business defended the official policy and set the "correct" interpretation of Australia's relations with Indonesia in the public sphere.¹⁴

In 1974, the lobby comprised of key policymakers including Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, Ambassador to Indonesia Robert Furlonger, the Director of the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO) Gordon Jockel, the head of the South Asia Division in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Graham Feakes, and his First Assistant Secretary Richard Woolcott.¹⁵ The lobby argued that an independent Timor would be a 'non-viable state' that would threaten regional security, and encouraged Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. Furlonger wrote,

"The thought of a poor, uneducated, probably unstable, independent Eastern Timor on our doorstep and susceptible to subversion and exploitation by other Powers, should be no more attractive to us than Indonesia."¹⁶

Indonesia shared Australia's anxiety about an independent Timor and resolved to incorporate the territory; first, via a propaganda and political campaign, and later, by military force. Woolcott argued that Australia should support Indonesia's incorporation of Timor:

¹² Clinton Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives – Occupation, Resistance, and International Political Activism* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 47.

¹³ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 189-190.

¹⁴ Geoffrey C. Gunn and Jefferson Lee, *A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor* (Manila: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1994), 13-16.

¹⁵ Nancy Viviani, "Australians and the Timor Issue," *Australian Outlook* 30, no. 2 (1976): 201, doi: 10.1080/10357717608444566.

¹⁶ "Document 17 Letter from Furlonger to Feakes, Jakarta, 30 July 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 73.

“There is now very little likelihood of a proper act of self-determination taking place in Portuguese Timor and that Australia’s best long-term interests, as well as those of Indonesia, and possibly even those of the majority of the indigenous Timorese in East Timor, are likely to be served by the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia.”¹⁷

Policymakers understood that Indonesia’s actions in Timor would be classified in the United Nations (UN) as “outright aggression,” and would contravene, “Article 2(3) and (4) of the Charter which provides that international disputes shall be settled by peaceful means.”¹⁸ However, the lobby argued that good relations with a stable and united Indonesia were of paramount importance to Australia. Woolcott asserted:

“There is no doubt in my mind that our relations with Indonesia in the long-term are more important to us than the future of Portuguese Timor...I know I am suggesting that our principles should be tempered by the proximity of Indonesia and its importance to us and by the relative unimportance of Portuguese Timor, but, in my view, this is where our national interest lies.”¹⁹

The ‘agreed consensus’ amongst policymakers was that the Government act to “contain the damage to the Australian/Indonesian relationship” and to “limit the recrudescence of latent hostility towards Indonesia in the Australian community.”²⁰ Australian public support for self-determination in Timor ran counter to the policy of maintaining stable Australia-Indonesia relations.

The lobby acted to provide diplomatic and military support to Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor and neutralise public opinion in Australia. The appearance of self-determination in Timor was of vital importance for the Government to neutralise Australian public opinion. At a summit meeting in Yogyakarta on 6 September 1974, Whitlam told Soeharto, “For the domestic audience in Australia, incorporation into Indonesia should appear to be a natural process arising from the

¹⁷ “Document 210 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 3 September 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 379.

¹⁸ Clinton Fernandes, “Accomplice to Mass Atrocities: The International Community and Indonesia’s Invasion of East Timor,” *Politics and Governance* 3, no. 4 (2015): 6, <http://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/272>

¹⁹ “Document 166 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 14 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 309.

²⁰ “Document 365 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 9 December 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 613.

wishes of the people.”²¹ After the Whitlam-Soeharto meeting, Woolcott instructed Australian diplomats at the UN and Embassy in Jakarta about Australia’s policy:

“It is worth recording – for limited distribution only – that the Prime Minister put his views on this subject frankly in the following way: ‘I am in favour of incorporation but obeisance has to be made to self-determination. I want it incorporated but I do not want this done in a way which will create argument in Australia which would make people more critical of Indonesia.’”²²

The Government placed Australia’s support for self-determination in Timor on the public record, and privately supported Indonesian military plans. In August 1975, Australia’s new Ambassador to Indonesia, Richard Woolcott advised his Embassy staff,

“Discussions with the Prime Minister indicate that in his view we should not repeat not be in a position where we could be held to be approving in advance Indonesian intervention without a Portuguese request or in effect giving signal to undertake it. On the other hand, we should equally not wish to be made responsible for blocking Indonesian intervention...”²³

“Non-attributable background briefings” to “responsible editors” were integral to managing public opinion. The briefs, which expressed sympathy for Indonesia’s interests in Timor, assisted the lobby to minimise “anti-Indonesian feeling” amongst the Australian public whilst concealing the Government’s close involvement in Indonesian military planning.²⁴ Woolcott advised his Embassy staff:

“[I]n dealing with the press we need to be careful in our indications about how closely we are in touch with the Indonesians and in any reference to the Indonesians’ consulting us about or giving us warning of intervention or seeking Australian understanding of it.”²⁵

²¹ “Document 26 Record of Meeting between Whitlam and Soeharto, State Guest House, Yogyakarta, 6 September 1974, 10 a.m.,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 96.

²² “Document 37 Minute from Woolcott to Renouf, Canberra, 24 September 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 111.

²³ “Document 186 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 25 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 340.

²⁴ See, “Document 186 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 25 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 340; “Document 182 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 24 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 336.

²⁵ “Document 186 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 25 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 340.

The Government's policies and actions functioned in support of Indonesia's annexation and incorporation of Timor. The Government aimed to prevent an independent Timor, because it would provide a democratic alternative to Soeharto's New Order regime, and threaten Indonesian unity and stability. Michael Curtin (DFA) explained,

"If an independent and politically radicalised East Timor were to make a go of it, with political and economic help not to Indonesia's liking, it would certainly become something for discontented Indonesians to look to."²⁶

As discussed, a united, stable and friendly Indonesia has been an enduring objective of Australia's strategic policy. Accordingly, the Secretary of the DFA, Alan Renouf, advised:

"We should accept that incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia seems fast becoming an accomplished fact. Australia should not resist this trend and, indeed, should accept it as probably now the best solution. Otherwise we should have a running sore in the region poisoning relations between ourselves and the Indonesians for years to come... We should continue to remain as detached as we can from the Portuguese Timor problem and avoid becoming a party principal."²⁷

Australian foreign policy was bipartisan. The Liberal National Party (LNP), led by Malcolm Fraser, recognised the *de facto* legitimacy of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1978, and extended *de jure* recognition in January 1979.²⁸ The ALP, led by Bob Hawke, recognised Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1986.²⁹ In December 1989, Australia and Indonesia signed the *Timor Gap Zone of Co-operation Treaty* to administer the exploitation of natural resources in the Timor Gap; the first international agreement founded upon the principle of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.³⁰ The ALP, led by Paul Keating, deepened Australia's military relations with Indonesia, culminating in an *Agreement on Maintaining Security* (AMS; 1995).³¹ Australia's

²⁶ "Document 260 Minute from Curtin to Feakes and Joseph, Canberra, 15 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 466.

²⁷ "Document 389 Submission to Peacock, Canberra, 22 December 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 647-648.

²⁸ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Parliament of Australia, *East Timor: Final Report of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee* (2000), 155, 157.

²⁹ ALP, *Australian Labor Party Platform, Constitution & Rules as approved by the 37th National Conference Resolution* (Hobart: ALP, 1986), 143.

³⁰ James Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: Intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 43.

³¹ "Leaders sign historic Indonesian treaty," *Australian*, December 19, 1995.

bipartisan foreign policy created a margin of political comfort, allowing Australian governments to support Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and dismiss public opposition without consequence.

The LNP, led by John Howard, did not benefit from this bipartisan consensus. In January 1998, the ALP adopted self-determination in Timor as the party platform and ended the bipartisan agreement to recognise Indonesian sovereignty. Less than one year later, the new Indonesian President, B.J. Habibie, announced a referendum on Timor's political status. The end of the bipartisan agreement enabled activists to contest the official policy effectively. By September 1999, public support for an independent Timor had forced the Howard Government to accept responsibility for a UN peacekeeping operation to Timor, known as International Force East Timor (InterFET). Australian intervention in Timor fractured relations with Indonesia. In October 1975, First Assistant Secretary at the Department of Defence, William Beal Pritchett, predicted this outcome.

1.2 Argument of the thesis

This thesis argues that critical public opinion gave effect to Pritchett's prediction and created tension in Australia's relations with Indonesia. Central to this argument is the policy divide between Woolcott and Pritchett.

In 1975, Indonesia engineered a civil conflict in Timor. Indonesian Generals urgently requested the Prime Minister's view on a direct military intervention to 'restore order.'³² Woolcott and Pritchett both advised the Government to ensure that Timor did not become an irritant to Australia's relations with Indonesia. Woolcott argued,

“We are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor...Indonesia is simply not prepared to accept the risks they see to them in an independent Timor and I do not believe that we will be able to change their minds on this...What Indonesia now looks to from Australia in the present situation is some understanding of their attitude.”³³

³² “Document 166 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 14 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 306-309; “Document 183 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 24 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 336-337.

³³ “Document 169 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 17 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 313.

Pritchett agreed that good relations with Indonesia were of paramount importance to Australia, and warned that Timor could become an irritant in these relations:

“What has concerned us in Defence is that the issue of Portuguese Timor might develop in such a way as substantially to impair the friendly relations between the two countries, and to identify Australia in Indonesian eyes as an adversary, or at least an unsympathetic and unhelpful neighbour, with erosion of the mutual confidence essential to our long-term defence interest.”³⁴

Woolcott and Pritchett disagreed about what the Government must do to ensure that Timor did not complicate Australia’s relations with Indonesia. Woolcott argued that the Government must support Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor and neutralise public opinion in Australia:

“If Indonesia does intervene I think we should do our best to contain the damage to the Australian/Indonesian relationship and act to limit a recrudescence of latent hostility to Indonesia in Australia.”³⁵

Pritchett presented a significant counterpoint to Woolcott’s policy. Pritchett argued that Fretilin would maintain political dominance and resist integration with Indonesia:

“The status and attitude of Fretilin appear basic realities to which Indonesian policy, and our own, must adjust. Woolcott argues in his cable that Australian domestic pressures can be contained, and should be contained, in the interests of preserving “our long-term national interest.” It is precisely the practicability of this course that we have queried in Defence, and would query the more today.”³⁶

Pritchett argued the Indonesia would use significant military force to incorporate Timor and that the Government could not contain the public impact in Australia:

“To achieve integration, Indonesia would have to dispose of Fretilin. There appears no prospect at all that this could be achieved by political negotiation: it would require force

³⁴ “Minute from Strategic and International Policy Division, Department of Defence, 9 October 1975,” in Richard Walsh and George Munster, *Documents on Australian defence and foreign policy, 1968 – 1975* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1980), 219-220.

³⁵ “Document 169 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 17 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 314.

³⁶ “Minute from Strategic and International Policy Division, Department of Defence, 9 October 1975,” in Walsh and Munster, *Documents on Australian defence*, 222.

on a scale that could not be hidden from the Australian public eye. Even were Fretilin to crack and weaken, we would have to expect that a significant residue of opponents of Indonesia would take to the hills in guerrilla operations.”³⁷

Pritchett argued that public opposition to Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor would damage Australia’s co-operative relations with Indonesia.³⁸ Pritchett advised the Government to persuade Indonesia to enter into a security arrangement with an independent Timor.³⁹

The Government preferred Woolcott’s advice over that of Pritchett. On 15 October, the DFA outlined an Australian policy to privately support Indonesian action in Timor, and manage public opinion in Australia:

“We would not be doing anything physically to prevent Indonesia from doing whatever it might believe it has to do. We would simply be asking the Indonesians to allow us publicly to disassociate ourselves from Indonesian military intervention.”⁴⁰

The next day, Indonesian Special Forces executed five Australia-based journalists at the border town of Balibo, Timor: Gary Cunningham, Greg Shackleton and Anthony Steward (Channel 7), and Brian Peters and Malcolm Rennie (Channel 9).⁴¹ The film footage belonging to the journalists, who became known as the Balibo Five, would have exposed Indonesia’s military intervention in Timor.

Woolcott encouraged the Government to contain the damage to Australia-Indonesia relations and minimise the public impact in Australia:

“Although we know it is not true, the formal position of the Indonesian government is still that there is no Indonesian military intervention in East Timor. If the Minister said or implied in public the Indonesian Government was lying we could invite a hurt and angry reaction.”⁴³

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, 220.

³⁹ Ibid, 223-225.

⁴⁰ “Document 260 Minute from Curtin to Feakes and Joseph, Canberra, 15 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 464.

⁴¹ Desmond Ball and Hamish McDonald, *Death in Balibo Lies in Canberra* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 115, 118-119.

⁴³ “Document 310 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 29 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 533.

The Government informed the Australian public that the journalists were “missing” at the scene of “heavy fighting” and concealed Indonesia’s military involvement in the death of the Balibo Five.⁴⁴

Indonesia’s intervention at Balibo involved military force on a scale that the Government could never conceal from the Australian public eye. Relatives of the journalists, the media and interested Australians exposed Indonesia’s involvement in the journalist’s deaths. These activists ensured that the Australian public understood events at Balibo, which mobilised public opinion and strained Australia-Indonesia relations.

In Australia, former military personnel, academics and student unionists, trade unionists and parliamentarians, aid organisations, Timor interest groups, journalists and churches comprised a broad social movement that functioned in solidarity with Timor’s independence campaign.⁴⁵ This solidarity movement exposed Indonesia’s military force in Timor, transforming Australian public understanding and undermining Government efforts to neutralise public opinion. Australian public support for self-determination in Timor, and opposition to Australia’s co-operative policies toward Indonesia, caused sustained periods of decline in Australia-Indonesia relations.

Between 6 and 12 September 1999, public support for an independent Timor forced the Australian Government to accept responsibility for InterFET, in a move that fractured Australia-Indonesia relations.⁴⁶ Public action effectively changed official policy in a short period, because it built upon 24 years of activism that had ensured that Timor never faded from domestic attention. As Pritchett predicted, Australian Governments could never conceal Indonesian military force in Timor, with enduring consequences for Australia-Indonesia relations.

1.3 Materials and methodology

The thesis refers to two categories of sources. The first category is published material, including books, journal articles, newspaper reports, Senate inquiries and parliamentary research papers. Australian diplomatic cables, intelligence data, documents and assessments, and Indonesian military documents are included in the first category. Leaked documents related to Australian

⁴⁴ James Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed* (Milton, QLD: Jacaranda, 1983), 240-246.

⁴⁵ Part 7.1, “The Right to Self-determination,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 710-732.

⁴⁶ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 86 – 144.

foreign policy toward Indonesia's occupation of Timor are extensive. To analyse the leaked material, the thesis refers to three main texts.

Richard Walsh and George Munster's *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1968-75* (1980) contains classified documents, which reveal Australia's close involvement in Indonesia's plans to annex Timor between 1974 and 1975. The Fraser Government used a series of *ex parte* injunctions to block the publication and distribution of the text in Australia, based on the breach of Australian copyright laws. However, a number of Australian libraries obtained copies prior to the injunction.⁴⁷ Walsh and Munster's *Secrets of State: A detailed assessment of the book they banned* (1982) analysed the banned book, accompanied by excerpts of the diplomatic cables.⁴⁸ Desmond Ball's "Silent witness: Australian intelligence and East Timor" (2001), examines leaked Australian intelligence material about Indonesian military activity to subvert the August 1999 referendum.⁴⁹

The second category consists of documentary material, such as archived Government records related to Timor held at the National Archives of Australia. Section 33 of the *Archives Act* (1983) restricts access to sensitive records expected to compromise "the security, defence or international relations of the Commonwealth." Therefore, a number of records remain classified and the thesis only examines documents the Australian Government considered appropriate for public release.

Records associated with Timor's independence campaign are critical. John Waddingham and Pat Walsh's website, "Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor" (CHART) and Clinton Fernandes website, "Companion to East Timor" provide digitised copies of these records. Similarly, the United States-based East Timor Action Network (ETAN) compiled domestic and international records associated with Timor's independence online at "Documents on East Timor" (November 1991 – April 1996) and online at "East-Timor list" (1998 – 2010).

⁴⁷ Clinton Fernandes, "Ongoing Sensitivities: Australian Records About Indonesia's War Crimes in East Timor," (conference paper, the Conference of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, 2015).

⁴⁸ Richard Walsh and George Munster, *Secrets of State: A detailed assessment of the book they banned* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson for Walsh & Munster, 1982).

⁴⁹ Desmond Ball, "Silent witness: Australian intelligence and East Timor," *The Pacific Review* 14, no. 1 (2001): 35-62, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09512740010018552>

1.4 Literature review

This thesis presents an original synthesis about the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion on Timor.

The history of Timor is firmly established in the literature. Scholars have provided detailed accounts about Timor's colonial experience between the 16th Century and late 1970s.⁵⁰ Similarly, scholars have analysed state building inside Timor after 1999 and Timor's democratic experience after independence in 2002.⁵¹ However, the history of Timorese resistance to Indonesian occupation has received less attention.

In this respect, the Timor-Leste Studies Association's (TLSA) publication of the 2015 conference proceedings to, 'Timor-Leste: The local, the regional and the global,' is an important contribution. *Timor-Leste: 1975 – 40 years on* (2016) is a separate volume, which examines Timor's independence struggle in 1975.⁵² The role of the Australian solidarity movement in Timor's independence features prominently. John Waddingham studied radio communication between the resistance in Timor and activists in Australia, which provided the Australian public with an important source of information about Indonesia's occupation of Timor.⁵³ Clinton Fernandes considers the role of Australian journalists in Timor's independence campaign. Fernandes argues that journalists exposed Indonesia's involvement in the death of the Balibo Five, and the conflict between the journalists and policymakers sustained public attention on Timor.⁵⁴

Notable studies examine the domestic and international dimension of Indonesia's occupation of Timor. In 1983, former Australian consul to Dili, James Dunn published *Timor: A People Betrayed*, which examined Timorese resistance to Indonesian occupation between 1974 and 1975. Dunn relied on interviews with Timorese refugees, and radio communication between Darwin-based activists and Fretilin to explain Indonesia's invasion of Timor in December 1975, and reveal Australian complicity.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ James Dunn, *East Timor: From Portuguese colonialism to Indonesian incorporation* (Canberra: Legislative Research Service, Parliamentary Library, 1977).

⁵¹ Michael Leach and Damien Kingsbury, *The Politics of Timor-Leste: Democratic Consolidation after Intervention* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 2013).

⁵² Sarah Smith et al. eds., *Timor-Leste: The local, the regional and the global 2015*, vol. 2, *Timor-Leste: 1974-40 Years On* (Perth: Swinburne Press, 2016).

⁵³ John Waddingham, "Occupation and Resistance: Primary sources in East Timor history, 1975-1989," in *Timor-Leste*, 2: 29-34.

⁵⁴ Clinton Fernandes, "Blood sacrifice at Balibo: Australia as a 'party principal,'" in *Timor-Leste*, 2: 16-19.

⁵⁵ Dunn, *Timor*, vii-xii.

In 1984, human rights activists Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong published *The war against East Timor*, a history of Timorese resistance to integration with Indonesia after 1975. Budiardjo and Soei Liong studied reports produced by Australian activists, Fretilin publications and leaked Indonesian military documents created between 1981 and 1982. *The war against East Timor* provided an initial analysis of the international solidarity network, and created an account of ongoing Indonesian military operations inside Timor that countered the silence of the Australian Government.⁵⁶

In 1991, sociologist Dr. John G. Taylor published *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor*, an analysis of Indonesia's occupation of Timor between 1976 and 1999. Taylor compiled evidence from a variety of sources including Fretilin radio broadcasts, the testimony of Timorese refugees in Australia and Portugal, and leaked intelligence documents from Western Governments, to document the history of Indonesia's occupation of Timor.⁵⁷ The study challenged Australian Government claims about Indonesian Administration of Timor.

The thesis contributes to such literature, by examining Australian foreign policy toward Indonesia's occupation of Timor. There have been several studies in this area. In 2001, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) published *East Timor in Transition 1998 – 2000: An Australian policy challenge*.⁵⁸ Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, claimed to have produced 'an account of particular authority,' sufficient to silence critical domestic opinion.⁵⁹ However, two omissions undermine the credibility of the book. First, DFAT's Historical Documents Projects Section did not produce the account. Rather, a team of departmental officers involved in making Australian foreign policy between 1998 and 2000 published the account, and therefore chose material that vindicated Australian policy. Second, the publication omits Australian diplomatic and intelligence cables dated and leaked in 1999, which exposed the Government's knowledge about the Indonesian military's campaign to subvert the referendum in Timor.

⁵⁶ Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *The war against East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1984), xvi – xviii.

⁵⁷ John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor* (Leichhardt, NSW: Pluto Press, 1991), ix- xiii.

⁵⁸ DFAT, *East Timor in Transition 1998 – 2000: An Australian Policy Challenge* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001).

⁵⁹ Alexander Downer, "Speech by the Hon Alexander Downer, MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs," (speech, the launch of the book *East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Canberra, July 17, 2001).

In 2002, News Limited Journalists Don Greenless and Robert Garran provided a second account of Australian foreign policy toward Timor. *Deliverance: The inside story of East Timor's fight for freedom* synthesised “hundreds of secret documents” and “off the record” interviews with senior Government and military officials in Canberra and Jakarta.⁶⁰ Whilst the account claims to “strip away the myths and self-interested accounts to reveal...the real story,” John Martinkus, an Australian journalist that reported from Timor from 1995, astutely observed that the book reproduced the official Indonesian and Australian account without criticism.⁶¹

In 2003, historians Peter Edwards and David Goldsworthy published a second volume of *Facing North: A Century of Australian engagement with Asia*, which considered Australia's strategic policy toward Asia between 1970 and 2000.⁶² In “Chapter Six: East Timor,” Goldsworthy produced an extensive and detailed analysis of Australia's foreign policy toward Timor. Importantly, Goldsworthy referred to “an array of groups and individuals” in Australia that maintained public attention on “self-determination and human rights” in Timor, and ensured the government “faced constant scrutiny” in formulating Australian foreign policy.⁶³

However, the account does not explain the basis of support for an independent Timor in Australia, nor how the solidarity movement mobilised public opinion. Similar to each of the three texts discussed, Goldsworthy omits the role of the solidarity movement in Australia. Furthermore, each text does not demonstrate how the Government defended its foreign policy against the ‘constant scrutiny,’ nor do they examine the conflict between official policy and public opinion.

Professor James Cotton's *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: Intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia* (2004), is one notable exception to the above studies.⁶⁴ Cotton analyses Australian diplomatic records on Timor for the period 1975-76 and 1998 – 2000. Cotton also provides a moral explanation for sustained Australian public attention on Timor, suggesting, “Jakarta's policy in East Timor ran counter to so many of the fundamentals held by Australians regarding good governance and humanitarian values.”⁶⁵ However, Cotton does not examine the activities of the solidarity movement in creating and sustaining public attention on human rights violations in Timor.

⁶⁰ Don Greenless and Robert Garran, *Deliverance: The inside story of East Timor's fight for freedom* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002), book jacket.

⁶¹ John Martinkus, “Tactical Omissions,” *Australian Book Review*, no. 244 (2002): 24.

⁶² Peter Edwards and David Goldsworthy eds., *Facing north: A century of Australian engagement with Asia*, vol 2. *1970s to the 2000* (Carlton South, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

⁶³ Goldsworthy, “East Timor,” in *Facing north*, 2:465.

⁶⁴ Cotton, *East Timor*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 5.

Studies that are more recent do examine how solidarity movement undermined government policy. Clinton Fernandes' *The Independence of East Timor: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives – Occupation, Resistance and International Political Activism* (2011) is one innovative study that considers aspects of the Australian solidarity movement.⁶⁶ However, Fernandes account considers the goals, tactics and effectiveness of the Australian solidarity movement, as one part of the broader international solidarity network. Moreover, Fernandes evaluates how the transnational network drew international attention to the conflict in Timor, and is less concerned to demonstrate Australian foreign policy and the challenges it faced by Australian domestic opinion.

Thus, this thesis presents an original political argument about domestic opposition to Australian foreign policy, which synthesises the historical scholarship of Australia-Indonesia-Timor.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis presents three chapters that examine the pressure of public opinion on Australian foreign policy, and evaluate the consequences for Australia-Indonesia relations.

Chapter Two examines the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion between April 1974 and January 1983. The Whitlam Government pursued good relations with Indonesia, by supporting Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and acting to influence favourable public opinion in Australia. The Government concealed Indonesian involvement in the deaths of the Balibo Five, cementing the official policy. However, interested Australians exposed Indonesia's involvement at Balibo, mobilising public opinion and inviting an angry Indonesian reaction.

The Fraser Government assisted Indonesia to consolidate control over Timor, by deflecting international criticism of Indonesia at the UN and targeting communication links between Australia and Timor. The Government's strategy to manage public opinion culminated between 1977 and 1983. Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty in Timor at a time that a severe, military-induced famine gripped the territory.

Chapter Three explores Australian foreign policy and public opinion between 1983 and 1996. The Hawke Government sent a Parliamentary Delegation to Timor in 1983. The Delegation reported that the Indonesian Administration was the authority in effective control, and the

⁶⁶ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*.

Government recognised Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1986. In December 1989, Australia and Indonesia signed the *Timor Gap Zone of Co-operation Treaty*; the first international agreement founded upon the principle of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.

Activists in Australia re-established contact with Timor during this period. Activists exposed ongoing Indonesian military campaigns in Timor, contesting official Australian reports and straining Australia-Indonesia relations. In November 1991, the massacre of Timorese civilians at Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili evoked a strong domestic reaction in Australia, and caused the solidarity movement to accelerate and grow.

The Keating Government strengthened Australia's relations with Indonesia after Santa Cruz. Bilateral defence co-operation culminated in 1995, with the AMS. Activists worked against official policy; pressuring the Government to suspend Australia's defence co-operation with Indonesia, and support a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Timor. Public opposition to official policy strengthened after Santa Cruz, and a series of diplomatic embarrassments over Timor marked the Government's last year in office.

Chapter Four demonstrates how the Howard Government supported Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. It argues that the end of the bipartisan consensus was a critical development, which enabled activists to contest official policy effectively. By September 1999, public support for an independent Timor had forced the Government to accept responsibility for a UN peacekeeping operation to Timor and fulfilled Pritchett's prediction. The chapter tests each additional element of Pritchett's prediction, discussing how Australian intervention in Timor damaged relations with Indonesia. Australian policy failed on its own terms of realism, pragmatism and hard headedness. This concludes the thesis.

Chapter 2: Australian Foreign Policy, 1974-1983

The conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion toward Timor emerged between 1974 and 1983. The Whitlam Government pursued good relations with Indonesia by encouraging and supporting Indonesia's incorporation of Timor, and acting to shape favourable public opinion in Australia.

In October 1975, the Government received intelligence that Indonesian military intervention in Timor was imminent. Pritchett predicted that Indonesian intervention in Timor would complicate Australia-Indonesia relations. In effect, Indonesian intervention would involve military force on a scale that the Government could not conceal, thereby provoking a strong domestic reaction in Australia and straining Australia-Indonesia relations.

The death of the Balibo Five exemplified Pritchett's prediction. Activists exposed Indonesian military involvement in the journalist's deaths, undermining official efforts to contain the public impact in Australia, and mobilising a strong domestic reaction that angered Indonesia.

Public opposition to official policy continued from the Whitlam to the Fraser Government. Activists exposed ongoing Indonesian military campaigns in Timor, which evoked a strong public reaction and caused periods of decline in Australia-Indonesia relations. The Fraser Government acted to manage public opinion and prevent any further damage to bilateral relations. Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1979, at a time that a severe, military-induced famine gripped the territory. The Government reaffirmed Australian recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in January 1983.

2.1 The Whitlam Government and Indonesia's incorporation of Timor, 1974- 75

Timor's status changed dramatically in 1974. On 25 April, the Armed Forces Movement led by General António de Spínola launched a 'Revolution of the Carnations' and deposed the dictatorship of Portuguese Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano. President Spínola committed to the decolonisation of Timor, based on the right to self-determination and independence. Timor became a non-self-governing territory under Portuguese Administration, and an item on the UN decolonisation agenda.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Part 7.1. "The Right to Self-determination," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 610-611.

In May, three political parties emerged inside Timor. The Timorese Democratic Union (*União Democrática de Timor*; UDT) supported progressive autonomy under Portugal; the Timorese Social Democratic Association (*Associação Social Democratica Timor*; ASDT) supported a democratic and independent Timor; and the Timorese Democratic People's Association (*Associação Popular Democrática Timorense*; APODETI) supported association with Indonesia.⁶⁸ In September, the ASDT became Fretilin (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente*; Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). Fretilin attracted popular support, claiming to be “the only legitimate representatives” of the Timorese.⁶⁹

The Whitlam Government encouraged Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. The Government's close involvement stemmed from the strategic assessment that an independent Timor would be a non-viable state. On 3 May, the DFA prepared a Policy Planning Paper that concluded,

“Portuguese Timor is not at present a viable economic entity and for this reason and the absence of any local political elite, it would have no capability in the short-term to handle a self-governing or independent status.”⁷⁰

The DFA advised that “the logical long-term development” was that Timor “should become part of Indonesia.”⁷¹

The DFA identified an opportunity to secure Australian access to oil and natural gas deposits, located in the seabed of an undelineated maritime border between Australia and Timor, known as the “Timor Gap.” The DFA noted that it would be most favourable for Australia to conclude a future agreement for a permanent maritime boundary with Indonesia, rather than Portugal.⁷² Policymakers began advocating for Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. John McCredie, an official at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, wrote,

“We are at the beginning of an eternity of relations with the Indonesians in the Indian Ocean....Indonesian absorption of Timor makes geopolitical sense. Any other long-term

⁶⁸ “Document 13 Savingram to Posts, Canberra, 3 July 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 63, 65-66.

⁶⁹ Way, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 109.

⁷⁰ “Document 3 Policy Planning Paper, Canberra, 3 May 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 51.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, 52; “Document 4 Meeting of Ad Hoc Task Force on Portugal, Canberra, 3 May 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 53.

agreement would be potentially disruptive of both Indonesia and the region. It would help confirm our seabed agreement with Indonesia.”⁷³

Indonesia shared Australian anxieties about an independent Timor.⁷⁴ Indonesian operatives began briefing Australian diplomats about a low-level political operation to ensure that Timor voted for incorporation into Indonesia.⁷⁵ An inner circle of Javanese Generals, including Major General Ali Murtopo (Special Operations; OPSUS), Lieutenant-General Yoga Sugama (State Intelligence Coordinating Agency: BAKIN), Admiral Sudharmono (Operation Command for the Restoration of Security and Order; KOPKAMTIB) and Major-General Moerdani (Department of Defence and Security; HANKAM), would direct the operation. In 1969, these Generals were closely involved in Indonesia’s incorporation West Papua through an ‘Act of Free Choice,’ in which a minority of the population unanimously declared support for integration with Indonesia.⁷⁶ BAKIN believed that Indonesia could achieve the same result in Timor, observing that the Timorese were “not politically motivated” and “too backward” to resist manipulation.⁷⁷

Jakarta required a foreign ally who would conceal Indonesian involvement in Timor. Harry Tjan, a political operative at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), suggested that Australia’s role would be to provide diplomatic support to Indonesia at the UN, to facilitate the transfer of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.⁷⁸ Indonesian operatives sought a definitive Australian position, by the time of Prime Minister Whitlam’s meeting with General Soeharto in Yogyakarta between 5 – 8 September.⁷⁹

⁷³ “Document 9 Letter from McCredie to Feakes, Jakarta, 29 May 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 58.

⁷⁴ “Document 7 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 22 May 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 56; “Document 22 Record of Meeting with Tjan, Canberra, 21 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 85.

⁷⁵ “Document 12 Letter from Furlonger to Feakes, Jakarta, 3 July 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 62; “Document 20 Minute from Arriens to Furlonger, Jakarta, 14 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 79-80; “Document 22 Record of Meeting with Tjan, Canberra, 21 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 85-87.

⁷⁶ Dunn, *Timor*, 110; Joint Intelligence Organisation Report 12/76 – Military study – Indonesia Part 1 (1979). NAA: A13685, 12/76, Part 1;

⁷⁷ “Document 7 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 22 May 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 56.

⁷⁸ “Document 12 Letter from Furlonger to Feakes, Jakarta, 3 July 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 62.

⁷⁹ Ibid; “Document 20 Minute from Arriens to Furlonger, Jakarta, 14 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 79; “Document 22 Record of Meeting with Tjan, Canberra, 21 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 87; “Document 24 Brief for Whitlam, Canberra, 2 September 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 90.

The lobby began actively encouraging Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. Furlonger wrote,

"I think the very least that Soeharto would expect from us would be to share his judgment that it would be in the interests of the region – not only Indonesia – if Portuguese Timor were to become part of Indonesia. I personally have no difficulty in accepting this as a proposition: the thought of a poor, uneducated, probably unstable, independent Eastern Timor on our doorstep, and susceptible to subversion and exploitation by other Powers, should be no more attractive to us than to Indonesia."⁸¹

Pritchett interjected, arguing that Australia must deny Timor to any potential hostile power, including Indonesia, to protect Australia's defence interest:

"Without prejudice to our own concern to see Indonesian strategic interests satisfied as well as our own, we would for our part, favour the emergence of the territory through self-determination, as an independent state."⁸²

The lobby rejected Pritchett's submission, asserting that "a deliberate policy of denying Portuguese Timor to the Indonesians" would cause greater damage to Australia's defence interest.⁸³

Australian public support for self-determination in Timor was the critical question that confronted policymakers. The lobby acted to neutralise public opinion. Policymakers placed Australian support for self-determination in Timor on the diplomatic record, warning that Soeharto must not raise the question of Indonesia's covert political operations in Timor at Yogyakarta, as Whitlam "could never be on the record as having even tacitly acquiesced to such a proposal."⁸⁴ Meanwhile, diplomats cautioned Indonesian operatives against direct military intervention in Timor, explaining that immoderate Indonesian action would evoke a strong domestic reaction in Australia, and thus seriously complicate the Government's policy of close relations with Indonesia.⁸⁵

⁸¹ "Document 17 Letter from Furlonger to Feakes, Jakarta, 30 July 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 73.

⁸² "Document 21 Memorandum to Rogers, Canberra, 15 August 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 84.

⁸³ "Document 23 Memorandum to Department of Defence, Canberra, 26 August 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 88.

⁸⁴ "Document 17 Letter from Furlonger to Feakes, Jakarta, 30 July 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 73.

⁸⁵ "Document 22 Record of Meeting with Tjan, Canberra, 21 August 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 86-87.

At a meeting with Soeharto in Yogyakarta on 6 September 1974, Whitlam provided an authoritative statement about Australian foreign policy towards Timor. Whitlam told Soeharto,

“Two things were basic to this own thinking on Portuguese Timor. First, he believed that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia. Second, this should happen in accordance with the properly expressed wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor.”⁸⁶

The appearance of self-determination in Timor was vitally important for the Government to neutralise public opinion. Whitlam emphasised,

“For the domestic audience in Australia, incorporation into Indonesia should appear to be a natural process arising from the wishes of the people.”⁸⁷

After the Whitlam-Soeharto meeting, DFA Secretary Richard Woolcott instructed Australian diplomats at the UN and Embassy in Jakarta about Australia’s policy:

“It is worth recording – for limited distribution only – that the Prime Minister put his views on this subject frankly in the following way: ‘I am in favor of incorporation but obeisance has to be made to self-determination. I want it incorporated but I do not want this done in a way which will create argument in Australia which would make people more critical of Indonesia.’”⁸⁹

Background briefings were integral to managing public opinion. The briefs assisted the lobby to shape favourable public understanding about Timor, whilst concealing Australia’s close involvement in Indonesian plans. After the Whitlam-Soeharto meeting, the DFA prepared a brief ‘for selected journalists, academics and opinion formers’ that emphasised that an independent Timor would threaten regional security, and noted Australian support for self-determination.⁹⁰ On 9 September, the *Canberra Times* reported the briefing in full:

⁸⁶ “Document 26 Record of meeting between Whitlam and Soeharto, State Guest House, Yogyakarta, 6 September 1974, 10 a.m.,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 95.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 96.

⁸⁹ “Document 37 Minute from Woolcott to Renouf, Canberra, 24 September 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 111.

⁹⁰ “Document 29 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 12 September 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 102.

“Mr Whitlam is understood to have indicated Australia felt an independent Timor would be an unviable state and a potential threat to the stability to the area. But he is also thought to have made clear that the people of the colony should have the ultimate decision on their future.”⁹¹

Indonesian operatives understood that the Government supported Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor through a convincing process of self-determination. Major General Murtopo commented to Australian Ambassador to Lisbon, Frank Cooper:

“The Prime Minister’s support for the idea of incorporation into Indonesia had helped them to crystallise their own thinking and they were now firmly convinced of the wisdom of this course.”⁹²

Indonesian operatives began preparations for *Operation Komodo*; a clandestine, propaganda and political campaign to ensure the Timorese voted in favour of integration with Indonesia.⁹³

The first critical opinion emerged in the media after Whitlam-Soeharto background briefing. *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) journalist Peter Hastings argued that Whitlam and Soeharto had agreed that Timor was to be ‘handed over’ to Indonesia.⁹⁴ After travelling to Timor in October, Hastings published reports about the viability of an independent Timor, Fretilin’s political legitimacy, and the sustainability of Timorese resistance to integration with Indonesia.⁹⁵ Hastings concluded:

“Quite apart from the woeful effect on all mini-capitals from Port Moresby to Suva of Mr Whitlam’s urge to give away inconvenient islands, Portuguese Timor may not prove easily digestible to Indonesia, thus causing more problems than if it were independent. Let us wait a bit and see. This is not West Irian and it is not 1962.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ “Political trials offer to Whitlam,” *Canberra Times*, September 9, 1974.

⁹² “Document 45 Cablegram to Canberra, Lisbon, 14 October 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 119.

⁹³ “Document 41 Minute from Arriens to Furlonger and Dan, Jakarta, 30 September 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 115; “Document 49 Letter from Furlonger to Feakes, Jakarta, 16 October 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 123; “Document 54 Minute from Arriens to Furlonger, Jakarta, 26 October 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 128-129.

⁹⁴ Peter Hastings, “Whitlam treads dangerous ground on Timor,” *SMH*, September 16, 1974.

⁹⁵ Peter Hastings, “A European colony on our doorstep,” *SMH*, November 13, 1974; “Timor needs aid – and looks to Australia for it,” *SMH*, November 14, 1974; “Jakarta casts an anxious eye over Timor,” *SMH*, November 16, 1974.

⁹⁶ Peter Hastings, “Whitlam was given an unsophisticated briefing on Timor,” *SMH*, November 19, 1974.

Hastings' articles about the political aspirations of the Timorese challenged the Government's claim about the absence of 'local political elite' and mobilised public interest in an independent Timor.

Australian interest groups that campaigned for an independent Timor emerged. In October, Denis Freney, a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), travelled to Timor to learn about Fretilin's campaign for self-determination and independence. After returning to Australia, Freney established the Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET).⁹⁷ The CIET began publishing reports about the viability of an independent Timor. The first report, *East Timor on the Road to Independence: A Background Report* (1974) detailed Fretilin's political legitimacy and drew attention to a future Indonesian military operation to annex Timor.⁹⁸ The CIET mobilised public opinion, attracting support from the Australian Union of Students (AUS), the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament (AICD), members of non-government aid organisations (NGOs), former members of 'Sparrow Force' that served in Timor during World War Two (WWII), and churches.⁹⁹

The CIET also received support from Australian Trade Unions, who were closely associated with ALP Parliamentarians.¹⁰⁰ A campaign about Timor emerged in the Federal Parliament, led by ALP Parliamentarians who had previously met Fretilin's Minister for Foreign Affairs, José Ramos-Horta, in Canberra in July 1974.¹⁰¹ The Shadow Foreign Minister of the Liberal Party, Andrew Peacock, challenged the Government's claim that an independent Timor would be an unviable economic entity, arguing,

"The Labor government says that the people of Portuguese Timor cannot be self-sufficient. It ought to tell that to the Nauruans, the Tongans, the Samoans, or the Papua New Guineans."

⁹⁷ Denis Freney, *A Map of Days: Life on the Left* (Port Melbourne, VIC: Heinemann, 1991), 343-348.

⁹⁸ CIET, *East Timor on the Road to Independence: A Background Report* (Sydney: CIET, 1974).

⁹⁹ Viviani, "Australians and the Timor Issue," 209.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Document 59 Submission to Willesee, Canberra, 25 November 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 134; "Document 62 Submission to Willesee, Canberra, 6 December 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 137; Dunn, *Timor*, 144-146.

Peacock continued,

“[S]o far as Portuguese Timor is concerned we would prefer to see Portugal remain in control and assist with a program for self-determination.”¹⁰²

In November, the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Caucus called on the Government to confirm Australia’s commitment to self-determination in Timor. The Caucus proposed that a delegation of the Committee visit Timor to inform the Government’s future policy.¹⁰³

The Government tried to contain political debate. Foreign Minister Willesee argued against the Parliamentary Delegation to Timor, because popular support for Fretilin would impress the delegation and further mobilise public opinion in Australia. Willesee advised Whitlam,

“On the return of the delegation to Australia we could expect public statements which could reflect the anti-Indonesian impressions members might have gained in Portuguese Timor. These will make the conduct of our relations with Indonesia more difficult than the problem of Portuguese Timor in itself might otherwise make them...A visit by a joint Parliamentary delegation would be the most substantial external incursion...in recent years. Would it not encourage others?”¹⁰⁴

Willesee argued that ‘on balance,’ the Government should remain “politically detached from the problems of Timor as far as we are able, while keeping our options open and our policy under continuous review.”¹⁰⁵

Australian policymakers supported Indonesian military plans. At the end of October, Tjan informed the Embassy that HANKAM had prepared for a limited military operation to incorporate Timor into Indonesia, based on the request of certain sections of the population. Tjan added, “Pre-emptive action by Indonesia should not worry Australia unduly,” because Indonesia would fabricate evidence of communist subversion, sufficient to “dampen down public opinion in Australia.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 30 October 1974, 3043-3044 (Andrew Peacock).

¹⁰³ “Document 65 Letter from Willesee to Whitlam,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 142.

¹⁰⁴ “Attachment. Document 65 Letter from Willesee to Whitlam,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 144.

¹⁰⁵ “Document 65 Letter from Willesee to Whitlam,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 143.

¹⁰⁶ “Document 54 Minute from Arriens to Furlonger, Jakarta, 26 October 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 129.

Pritchett disagreed, warning that Indonesian military intervention in Timor would provoke a strong domestic reaction in Australia, and complicate Australia-Indonesia relations:

“While we share their view that the incorporation of the territory into Indonesia would be the most satisfactory outcome if it could be arranged in a politically acceptable way, the Australian Government would experience substantial political difficulties domestically and its relations with Indonesia, if Indonesian activity in respect of Portuguese Timor could be represented as improper pressure or coercion.”¹⁰⁷

Feakes rejected Pritchett’s brief, arguing, “No Australian Government could allow distant relations with an Indonesian Government to endure.” Whilst Feakes acknowledged that there would be a sharp public reaction in Australia, he cautioned policymakers “not to exaggerate how deeply it would run or how long it would last,” particularly if there was evidence of communist subversion.¹⁰⁸

Political developments inside Timor increased the urgency of the policy debate. In December, it became apparent that the majority of Timorese aspired to independence. Furthermore, Timorese military training, coupled with Timor’s mountainous terrain and openness to arms, suggested that a guerrilla resistance movement could be easily sustained.¹⁰⁹ The two objectives of Australian foreign policy –Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor through a convincing process of self-determination – were now incompatible.¹¹⁰ Michael Cook challenged the basic assumptions of Australia’s policy:

“There seemed to have been a basic assumption that Portuguese Timor would be like West Irian; the people would accept integration, and from this assumption followed our commitment to an internationally acceptable act of self- determination. What was now clear was that the people of Portuguese Timor were not malleable; integration was not a winnable goal; the situation itself had changed as people were becoming more active as

¹⁰⁷ “Document 63 Draft for Barnard, Canberra [December 1974],” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 140.

¹⁰⁸ “Document 67 Submission to Willesee, Canberra, 13 December 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 149. See also, “Note 1. Document 63 Draft for Barnard, Canberra [December 1974],” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 140.

¹⁰⁹ “Document 66 Record of Policy Discussion, Canberra, 11 December 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 145-146.

¹¹⁰ “Document 67 Submission to Willesee, Canberra, 13 December 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 148.

integration became more of a real possibility...In the long run independence may be better than integration.”¹¹¹

The lobby continued to support Indonesia’s military plans. Woolcott rejected the prospect of guerilla resistance to integration with Indonesia, arguing, “This can’t be taken seriously.”¹¹² Lance Joseph argued that Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor would be in the interests of Indonesia, Australia, and the region, noting that international criticism “would amount to no more than a flutter.”¹¹³ Joseph similarly dismissed concern that Timor would complicate Australia-Indonesia relations, asserting, “The Government, whatever its political persuasion, should have to consider how long it could afford to maintain frigid relations” with Indonesia.¹¹⁴

On 22 January 1975, Fretilin and UDT formed an alliance and signed a Joint Communiqué, agreeing that Timor should become independent.¹¹⁵ Indonesian Generals advanced plans to annex Timor, holding a large-scale military operation in Lampung Selatan, Sumatra, in preparation for the *Operasi Seroja* (Operation Lotus) invasion of Dili in December 1975.¹¹⁶

The Government could not conceal Indonesian military planning. On 21 February, Hastings reported “mounting and unwelcome indications” of Indonesian military activity; based on leaks in Jakarta, foreign press reports and letters from observers.¹¹⁷ Reports about future Indonesian intervention in Timor subsequently appeared on the front pages of major Australian newspapers.¹¹⁸ Editorials pressured the Government to defend the right of the Timorese to self-determination.¹¹⁹

The UDT-Fretilin Coalition sparked a major political debate about Australia’s policy. On 25 February, Peacock raised the question of Timor as a matter of public importance. Peacock

¹¹¹ Ibid, 146.

¹¹² “Note 6. A Marginal Comment to Attachment ‘Portuguese Timor – Talking points with Indonesia.’ Document 100 Memorandum to Jakarta, Canberra, 3 March 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 207.

¹¹³ “Document 85 Minute from Joseph to Feakes, Canberra, 14 February 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 185.

¹¹⁴ “Document 67 Submission to Willesee, Canberra, 13 December 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 149.

¹¹⁵ “Document 73 Cablegram to Lisbon, Canberra, 29 January 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 162 – 163.

¹¹⁶ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 126

¹¹⁷ Peter Hastings, “The Portuguese Timor question – Jakarta ponders a military ‘solution,’” *SMH*, February 21, 1975.

¹¹⁸ “Jakarta moves closer to takeover in Timor,” *SMH*, February 25, 1975.

¹¹⁹ Editorial, “Timor crisis,” *SMH*, February 26, 1975.

criticised that the Government had encouraged Indonesia's incorporation of Timor at Yogyakarta, and insisted that the Government now act to mediate in discussions between Indonesia, Portugal and Timor, to secure an act of self-determination.¹²⁰

The Government contained political debate by issuing routine statements in support of self-determination in Timor. The acting Minister for Foreign Affairs Bill Morrison, replied to Peacock, and repeated the official policy:

“The Government does not seek any special position in Portuguese Timor and it believes that the views and the attitudes of the people of Portuguese Timor...should be decisive.”¹²¹

The Government's commitment 'not to seek any special position in Portuguese Timor' confirmed the private understanding between Canberra and Jakarta that Australia would not intervene to secure self-determination in Timor or prevent Indonesia's annexation of the territory.

Australian public support for self-determination in Timor accelerated.¹²² In March, ALP Parliamentarian John Kerin led a Caucus delegation to Timor. The Caucus concluded that the overwhelming majority of Timorese aspired to independence, and that an independent Timor would be a viable state.¹²³ The delegation pressured the Government to adopt a constructive role in Timor's decolonisation, by re-establishing the Australian Consulate in Dili, and establishing an economic and technical assistance program to assist Timor's transition to independence.¹²⁴

A broad-based Trade Union, Aid Organisation and Student Delegation also visited Timor. The pro-Fretilin demonstrations in Dili strongly impressed Jill Jolliffe (AUS), who wrote, “The whole of Timor is in a FRETILIN fever.”¹²⁵ After returning to Australia, Jolliffe insisted that the Government establish an Australian aid program to support Timor's transition to independence.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25 February 1975, 640-643 (Andrew Peacock).

¹²¹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25 February 1975, 643 (Bill Morrison).

¹²² “Document 118 Brief for Whitlam,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 232-233; “Document 119 Brief for Whitlam, Canberra, 31 March 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 238.

¹²³ Dunn, *Timor*, 154.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 153 – 154.

¹²⁵ Jill Jolliffe, *Report from East Timor* (Canberra: ANU Student's Association, 1975), 3.

¹²⁶ “Urgent need for East Timor aid,” *Canberra Times*, March 25, 1975” in Tomohiko Kimura, “Australian foreign policymaking towards the East Timor question from April 1974 to January 1978: a re-examination,” (doctoral thesis, UNSW Canberra, 2012), 108.

Jolliffe's reports mobilised public opinion. On 3 April, students and activists demonstrated in support of self-determination in Timor, at the beginning of the Whitlam-Soeharto talks in Townsville.¹²⁷

Australia's new Ambassador to Indonesia, Richard Woolcott, dismissed public support for self-determination in Timor. Woolcott advised Whitlam not to raise the question of self-determination in Timor with Soeharto during talks in Townsville:

"We could be working ourselves into a position where we are impaling ourselves on the hook of self-determination...To demand it too stridently in Timor at present can be equated with a demand for independence. Do we want actually to encourage an independent East Timor? I would doubt it."¹²⁸

Pritchett suggested an alternative: Whitlam must persuade Soeharto that "the Timorese will not choose transfer into the Indonesian state." Pritchett proposed that Australia mediate to establish a Foundational Treaty between Jakarta and Dili, which would protect the strategic interests of both states. Pritchett explained,

"This treaty, which would be without a time limit, could refer to common interest, amity, and co-operation and so on, but would contain a key article whereby the parties would agree to consult together about developments affecting their common interests in the security and stability of the region."¹²⁹

The lobby worked against the prospect of an independent Timor, because it would provide a democratic alternative to Soeharto's New Order Regime and threaten Indonesian stability. Michael Curtin explained,

"If an independent and politically radicalised East Timor was to make a go of it, with political and economic help not to Indonesia's liking, it would certainly become something for discontented Indonesians to look to."¹³⁰

¹²⁷ "Indo-China first topic for PM, Suharto," *Canberra Times*, April 4, 1975.

¹²⁸ "Document 121 Letter from Woolcott to Whitlam, Canberra, 2 April 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 241.

¹²⁹ "Document 90 Letter from Pritchett to Feakes, Canberra, 21 February 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 190.

¹³⁰ "Document 260 Minute from Curtin to Feakes and Joseph, Canberra, 15 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 466.

Woolcott argued that Whitlam must prioritise good relations with a stable and united Indonesia, by supporting Indonesia's incorporation of Timor:

“Whatever Government is in power in Indonesia and indeed, whatever Government might be in power in Australia, the price of a hostile or unstable Indonesia for Australia would be very high.”¹³²

Whitlam met Soeharto in Townsville on 4 April. Whitlam stressed that Indonesia should not integrate Timor by military force; emphasising the Government's main concern that “this result should be achieved in a way which would not upset the Australian people.” Whitlam continued to express Australia's preference that Timor should be “associated with or integrated into Indonesia.” Furthermore, Whitlam stated that Australia's policy toward Indonesia in relation to Timor “would always be guided by the principle that good relations with Indonesia were of paramount importance.”¹³³ The covert operation to destabilise Timor and invite Indonesia's military intervention had the ‘green light.’

2.2 Pritchett's challenge

Indonesia's destabilisation campaign in Timor continued. On 10 August, in a ‘show of force’ in Dili, UDT staged a coup against the Portuguese Administration and sparked an armed conflict with Fretilin.¹³⁴ Indonesia's Ambassador in Lisbon requested that Portugal invite Indonesia to ‘restore order’ in Timor.¹³⁵ Indonesian Generals urgently sought Whitlam's views on Indonesia's direct military intervention.¹³⁶

Woolcott argued that the Government must ensure that Timor did not become an irritant to Australia's relations with Indonesia:

¹³² “Document 121 Letter from Woolcott to Whitlam, Canberra, 2 April 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 241.

¹³³ “Document 123 Record of Conversation between Whitlam and Soeharto, Townsville, 4 April 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 245.

¹³⁴ Way, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 301-302.

¹³⁵ “Document 183 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 24 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 336.

¹³⁶ “Document 166 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 14 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 306-309; “Document 183 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 24 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 336-337.

“We are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor...What Indonesia now looks to from Australia in the present situation is some understanding of their attitude.”¹³⁷

Woolcott advised the Government to provide diplomatic support to Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor and neutralise public opinion in Australia:

“We should do our best to contain the damage to the Australian/Indonesian relationship and act to limit a recrudescence of latent hostility to Indonesia in Australia.”¹³⁸

Woolcott advised the Government to “assist public understanding in Australia” and contain “criticism of Indonesia.”¹³⁹ Woolcott mused, “Perhaps we should also make an effort to secure through Parliament and the media greater understanding of our policy, and Indonesia’s.”¹⁴⁰ Woolcott continued,

“Leave events to take their course; and if and when Indonesia does intervene act in a way which would be designed to minimise the public impact in Australia and show privately understanding to Indonesia of their problems.”¹⁴¹

Woolcott concluded by reaffirming the paramount importance of good relations with Indonesia to Australia:

“There is no doubt in my mind that our relations with Indonesia in the long-term are more important to us than the future of Portuguese Timor...I know I am suggesting that our principles should be tempered by the proximity of Indonesia and its importance to us and by the relative unimportance of Portuguese Timor, but, in my view, this is where our national interest lies.”¹⁴²

¹³⁷ “Document 169 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 17 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 313.

¹³⁸ “Document 166 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 14 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 306.

¹³⁹ “Document 169 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 17 August 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 313.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 314.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² “Document 166 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 14 August 1974,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 309.

Whitlam accepted Woolcott's advice, writing in the margins, "Woolcott is right."¹⁴³

On 26 August, Whitlam delivered his first statement of Australian foreign policy toward Timor. Whitlam maintained Australia's non-involvement, stating,

"The Australian Government...does not regard itself as a party principal in Portuguese Timor. We continue to hold that the future of the territory is a matter for resolution by Portugal and the Timorese people themselves with Indonesia occupying an important place because of its predominant interest..."

Whitlam promoted the myth of a civil war between UDT and Fretilin that required Indonesian military assistance to restore order:

"Indonesian policy is to respect the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to self-determination and Indonesian leaders have often denied that Indonesia has any territorial ambitions towards Portuguese Timor. Nevertheless, Indonesia's concern about the situation in the territory has now led her to offer, if Portugal requests, to assist in restoring order there."¹⁴⁴

However, Soeharto refused to authorise a conventional invasion to annex Timor.¹⁴⁵ By October, Fretilin had firmly established control.¹⁴⁶

Pritchett provided a significant counterpoint to Woolcott's policy. Pritchett believed that Fretilin would maintain political dominance and would resist integration with Indonesia. Pritchett argued,

"The status and attitude of Fretilin appear basic realities to which Indonesian policy, and our own, must adjust. Woolcott argues in his cable that Australian domestic pressures can be contained, and should be contained, in the interests of preserving 'our long-term

¹⁴³ "Note 2 to Document 166 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 14 August 1974," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 309.

¹⁴⁴ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 26 August 1975, 492-493 (Gough Whitlam).

¹⁴⁵ "Document 246 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 30 September 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 439.

¹⁴⁶ "Document 257 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 13 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 460.

national interest.’ It is precisely the practicability of this course that we have queried in Defence, and would query the more today.”¹⁴⁷

Pritchett argued that Indonesia’s annexation of Timor would require military force on a scale that could not go undiscovered in Australia:

“To achieve integration, Indonesia would have to dispose of Fretilin. There appears no prospect at all that this could be achieved by political negotiation: it would require force on a scale that could not be hidden from the Australian public eye. Even were Fretilin to crack and weaken, we would have to expect that a significant residue of opponents of Indonesia would take to the hills in guerrilla operations.”¹⁴⁹

Pritchett argued that Indonesian military force in Timor would spark a major domestic protest in Australia that would seriously complicate Australia-Indonesia relations:

“If the Indonesians resorted to immoderate action to gain control of Portuguese Timor, the Australian domestic reaction would probably be such as to make it very difficult for the Government to sustain co-operative policies toward Indonesia. In particular, our program for defence aid and co-operation with Indonesia would probably come under attack from both the left and right of the domestic political spectrum.”¹⁵¹

Pritchett advised that, if critical public opinion forced the Government to adjust the defence aid and co-operation program, the Indonesian perspective of Australia would change. Defence relations would become “less easy and secure” as mutual confidence in bilateral relations declined. The Government’s defence posture would be discredited, and the demand for heightened defence expenditure and heightened defence readiness would increase.¹⁵² Pritchett argued, “A policy of simply seeking to ride out the expected difficulties would not be adequate.”¹⁵³

Pritchett proposed a clear alternative for Australia and Indonesia: accept an independent Timor. Pritchett argued that a Jakarta-Dili security agreement would satisfy both states security

¹⁴⁷ “Minute from Strategic and International Policy Division, Department of Defence, 9 October 1975,” in Walsh and Munster, *Documents on Australian defence*, 222.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 220.

¹⁵² Ibid, 220-221.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 224.

requirements. Timor would depend upon Indonesia for viable independence, whilst Indonesia became the dominant influence in the territory. The agreement offered Jakarta a ‘way out,’ as it was clear that the Timorese would not choose to associate with Indonesia, although long-term co-operation favoured Timor’s peaceful absorption into Indonesia. Finally, Australian mediation would strengthen relations with Indonesia.¹⁵⁴ Pritchett pressed on:

“It would clearly be difficult to persuade the Indonesians to adopt it. But with a major effort of statesmanship and careful preparation, it would not be impossible. It appears preferable to the likely alternatives now facing us. In the present circumstances of political stalemate...the time could be propitious for discussions with the Indonesians.”¹⁵⁵

Pritchett conceded that an independent Timor was the “second best” outcome. However, “the best solution” – Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor – would involve a protracted war of attrition with Fretilin, spark a major domestic protest in Australia, and strain Australia-Indonesia relations. Pritchett asserted that if the Government did not accept this line of policy, then “the question remains of how to protect the defence interest from the apparent risks of a deterioration in political relations with Indonesia.”¹⁵⁶

Later that day, Woolcott reinforced his policy advice to Canberra:

“It is the time for steely nerves, a calculated assessment of our long-term national interest, and for a continuing attempt to shape public opinion rather than react to it.”¹⁵⁷

The DFA upheld the Woolcott line:

“We would not be doing anything physically to prevent Indonesia from doing whatever it might believe it has to do. We would simply be asking the Indonesians to allow us publicly to disassociate ourselves from Indonesian military intervention.”¹⁵⁸

The ‘agreed consensus’ was that the Government neutralise critical public opinion in Australia and contain the damage to Australia-Indonesia relations.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 223-224.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 224.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ “Document 255 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 9 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 457.

¹⁵⁸ “Document 260 Minute from Curtin to Feakes and Joseph, Canberra, 15 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 464.

2.3 The Balibo Five

On 15 – 16 October, Indonesian Special Forces and local Timorese ‘partisan’ allies launched a major coordinated assault on six border towns in Timor.¹⁵⁹ At Balibo, Captain Yunus Yosfiah ordered Indonesian Special Forces to execute five Australia-based journalists: Gary Cunningham, Greg Shackleton and Anthony Stewart (Channel 7), and Brian Peters and Malcolm Rennie (Channel 9). The journalists’ film footage would have exposed Indonesia’s military intervention.¹⁶⁰ The journalists, known as the ‘Balibo Five,’ were dressed and photographed as legitimate targets in military uniforms; their bodies were then burnt.¹⁶¹ That evening, Sir Arthur Tange (DOD) informed Whitlam, Willesee and Defence Minister Bill Morrison.¹⁶²

Australian media initially reported that five journalists were missing after an Indonesian military offensive at Balibo.¹⁶³ Journalists published eyewitness accounts from a Portuguese Television crew and Fretilin soldiers, which suggested that the journalists had filmed Indonesian warships shelling Balibo, before sheltering from the invading forces in an old fort.¹⁶⁴ Jakarta immediately denied involvement.¹⁶⁵

Woolcott advised the Government to ‘tough it out.’¹⁶⁷ On 21 October, Whitlam deflected questions in the House of Representatives, stating that the journalists were “missing,” at the “scene of heavy fighting between rival factions.”¹⁶⁸ Whitlam concealed Australian intelligence that the journalists died in an Indonesian military operation. The Australian Embassy in Jakarta had received detailed intelligence about an Indonesian military assault on Balibo, at least three days before the attack began.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, the Government knew that the journalists had died

¹⁵⁹ Ball and McDonald, *Death in Balibo*, 114-117.

¹⁶⁰ Dunn, *Timor*, 239.

¹⁶¹ Dorelle Pinch, *Inquest into the Death of Brian Raymond Peters* (Sydney: New South Wales State Coroner, 2007), 110-115; Tom Sherman, *Report on the Deaths of Australian-Based Journalists in East Timor in 1975* (Canberra: DFA, 1996), 98-101.

¹⁶² Ball and McDonald, *Death in Balibo*, 158.

¹⁶³ “Indonesian attack. Five Australians missing,” *Canberra Times*, October 18, 1975.

¹⁶⁴ “Television Crew,” *Canberra Times*, October 20, 1975; “Warning to Australia,” *Canberra Times*, October 20, 1975.

¹⁶⁵ “Document 274 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 19 October 1975. 10.15 p.m.,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 487.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 21 October 1974, 2296 (Gough Whitlam).

¹⁶⁹ “Document 258 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 13 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 462; “Document 262 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 15 October 1975,” in *Documents*

within 10 hours of the assault.¹⁷⁰ In responding to the death of the Balibo Five, the Government locked itself into a strategy to support Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and contain the public impact in Australia.

Journalists exposed Indonesia's military involvement in the death of the Balibo Five. On 23 October, journalists reported that UDT forces had executed the Balibo Five.¹⁷¹ On 28 October, the Channel 9 Network released a partial account of the disappearance of Balibo Five during an Indonesian military assault on Balibo, based on the account of Fretilin eyewitness Guido dos Santos.¹⁷² In addition to investigating the status of the Balibo Five, journalists continued to publish reports about Indonesia's ongoing military operations in Timor.¹⁷³ Reports about Indonesian intervention in Timor mobilised public opinion.

Trade Unions led public protests in Australia. On 22 October, the Seamen's Union in Melbourne imposed an indefinite 'black ban' on the Indonesian vessel *Gunung Tambora*.¹⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) in Darwin imposed a ban on all trade with Indonesia. Trade unions at major cities subsequently banned all Indonesian shipping and cargoes for Indonesia.¹⁷⁵ Indonesia retaliated, suspending all shipping to Australia.¹⁷⁶

ALP Parliamentarians pressured the Government to act. On 29 October, the ALP Caucus Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee submitted a resolution to Cabinet that called on the Government to condemn Indonesia's military involvement in Timor, increase official aid to Timor and mediate between the disputing parties.¹⁷⁷ Questions about the status of the Balibo Five intensified in the Senate. On 29 October, Senator Gietzelt demanded that Willesee respond to "the consistent reports that the Australians were shot by either Indonesian troops or Indonesian backed troops and then their bodies burnt" and "demand the return of these bodies."¹⁷⁹

on *Australian Foreign Policy*, 468-470; "Document 265 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 16 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 472-476.

¹⁷⁰ Dunn, *Timor*, 239, 242; Ball and McDonald, *Death in Balibo*, 120.

¹⁷¹ "Australians executed by UDT," *Canberra Times*, October 23, 1975; "Indonesians say Timor bodies burnt," *SMH*, October 24, 1975.

¹⁷² "Indonesia deeply involved in Timor," *Canberra Times*, October 29, 1975.

¹⁷³ Bruce Juddery, "Call to Australia," *Canberra Times*, October 29, 1975; Michael Richardson, "Indonesian Navy renews attack," *SMH*, October 28, 1975.

¹⁷⁴ "Trouble over Timor. Jakarta Threat to Stop Ships," *Canberra Times*, October 27, 1975.

¹⁷⁵ "Embassy Rejects Reports," *Canberra Times*, November 11, 1975.

¹⁷⁶ "Indonesia Reacts to Australian Boycott of Ship," *Canberra Times*, November 10, 1975.

¹⁷⁷ "Document 305 Letter from Kerin to Willesee, Canberra, 29 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 526.

¹⁷⁹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 29 October 1975, 1531-1532 (Arthur Gietzelt).

The strong domestic reaction forced the Government to deliver a public statement the next day.¹⁸⁰ Willesee stated:

“The Government has viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia is involved in military intervention in Portuguese Timor. The position of the Australian Government is clear. We deplore the fighting in the border areas. We continue to believe that a solution to the problems in Portuguese Timor should be sought through peaceful means and free of external intervention.”¹⁸²

Willesee’s address was the first and only statement that referred to Indonesian involvement in Timor. Willesee delivered an amended statement, excluding any reference to “Indonesian military intervention.” Woolcott had intervened to exclude the reference, arguing,

“If the Minister says publicly that he regrets the degree of Indonesian military intervention in the affairs of Portuguese Timor, will he not stir up a hornet’s nest in Australia?

...Although we know it is not true the formal public position of the Indonesian Government is still that there is no Indonesian military intervention in East Timor.”¹⁸⁴

That afternoon, Woolcott reassured Indonesia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Adam Malik, that Australia’s policy had not changed.¹⁸⁵

Reports about Indonesian involvement in the death of the Balibo Five continued. On 6 November, the *Age* correspondent Michael Richardson reported that “200 Indonesian troops” were involved in the attack on Balibo.¹⁸⁶ Roger East, an Australian journalist that Indonesian soldiers would execute during the invasion of Dili in December 1975, interviewed three Fretilin soldiers who witnessed Indonesian troops ‘capture and execute’ the Balibo Five.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁰ “Document 307 Cablegram to Jakarta and Lisbon, Canberra, 29 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 529.

¹⁸² Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 30 October 1975, 1609 (Don Willesee).

¹⁸⁴ “Document 310 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 29 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 533.

¹⁸⁵ “Document 313 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 31 October 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 527.

¹⁸⁶ “Document 327 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 6 November 1975, 4.15 p.m.,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 553.

¹⁸⁷ “Document 334 Cablegram to Geneva, Canberra, 11 November 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 562-563; Dunn, *Timor*, 236.

Media reports mobilised public opinion. Between 2 and 3 November, the Friends of Fretilin painted anti-Indonesian and pro-Fretilin slogans on the houses of Indonesian diplomats and military attachés in Canberra, protesting Indonesia's military intervention in Timor.¹⁸⁸ The solidarity movement grew. A group of Melbourne-based activists, led by John Waddingham and Helen Hill, established the *Timor Information Service* (TIS) newsletter. The first TIS newsletter published detailed evidence about Indonesia's military intervention in Timor, and Indonesia's involvement in the death of the Balibo Five.¹⁸⁹

Aid Organisations reacted to the deteriorating humanitarian situation inside Timor. In early November, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) published the report of the Timor Task Force, which had visited Timor between 16 and 28 October. The Task Force argued that the greatest humanitarian need in Timor was the need to "reduce the threat of widespread bloodshed that would result from full scale attack on Timor."¹⁹¹ The ACFOA and its member agencies pressured the Government to take diplomatic action to prevent Indonesia's annexation of Timor.¹⁹² The ACFOA also attracted public support to alleviate the risk of famine in Timor. In November, the 'Timor Relief Appeal' raised \$160, 000 in donations and delivered a shipment of humanitarian aid to Dili.¹⁹³

The strong domestic reaction to Balibo in Australia angered Indonesia and created significant tension in bilateral relations.¹⁹⁴ General Yoga Sugama (BAKIN) insisted that the journalists died after sheltering in a house that was a Fretilin command post, which came under mortar attack. Sugama angrily responded to Woolcott's speculation, "in view of what appeared to be relatively minor damage" to the house, arguing,

¹⁸⁸ "Document 318 Record of telephone conversation between Sellars and Kadri, Canberra, 3 November 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 514.

¹⁸⁹ "Five Australian Newsmen Killed," *Timor Information Service*, no. 1 (November 1975): 4, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_01_p.pdf

¹⁹¹ ACFOA Timor Task Force, *Report on Visit to East Timor for ACFOA Timor Task Force* (Canberra: ACFOA, 1975), 2.

¹⁹² ACFOA Timor Task Force, *Report*, 2.

¹⁹³ Helen Hill, "The NGO's and Timor," *East Timor Today. ACFOA Development Dossier* 1 (1980): 11-12.

¹⁹⁴ "Document 319 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 3 November 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 542.

“Those who doubted this should stand inside a similar style of house when mortars came through the roof...[speculation] was based only on Fretilin propaganda.”¹⁹⁶

After this exchange, Woolcott warned,

“The Javanese have like the Chinese that mixture of sensitivity, pride, arrogance and inwards lookingness which can lead to a retreat into their shells and to avoid facing or to ignore the attitude of another country if it suits them to do so. I suspect they may have reached this point in relation to the journalists and that the truth of this incident may never be established.”¹⁹⁸

Later, Woolcott re-iterated the ‘agreed consensus’ that the Government manage public opinion and contain damage to Australia-Indonesia relations:

“Despite the very hostile media reaction to Indonesia’s actions which is no doubt influenced by the Balibo affair, I believe this should still be our approach...[Our] relations with Indonesia...will continue to be very important to us long after the Timor issue has been settled.”²⁰⁰

The Government never lodged a formal protest to Indonesia after the death of the Balibo Five.²⁰¹ Indonesia interpreted the Government’s actions as tacit consent for the invasion of Dili.²⁰²

2.4 The Fraser Government and Indonesia’s invasion of Timor, December 1975-April 1976

The LNP, led by Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, succeeded the ALP in November 1975. The Fraser Government continued to encourage Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor. After assuming office, Fraser wrote a letter to Soeharto, emphasising the importance of good relations with

¹⁹⁶ “Document 302 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 28 October 1975, 5.25 p.m.,’ in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 520-521.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 302.

²⁰⁰ “Document 365 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 9 December 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 613.

²⁰¹ Rodney Tiffen, *Diplomatic Deceits: Government, Media and East Timor* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), 23-24.

²⁰² Katsumi Ishizuka, “Australia’s Policy towards East Timor,” *The Round Table* 93, no. 374 (2004): 273, doi: 10.1080/00358530410001679611.

Indonesia to Australia, and sympathising with Indonesia's need to have "an appropriate solution for the problem of Portuguese Timor."²⁰³

The Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock, provided significant diplomatic support to Indonesian interests in Timor. After Michael Richardson reported, "I watched an Indonesian bomber and at least one Indonesian warship attacking East Timor," Peacock cautioned that, "Indonesia's patience over the civil war in East Timor should be noted."²⁰⁴²⁰⁵ On 28 November, Fretilin announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence and established the Democratic Republic of East Timor (DRET).²⁰⁶ The Government knew that "Fretilin is clearly in control" of Timor.²⁰⁷ However, Peacock publicly stated that Australia "could not accept claims by any one of the three main Timorese parties to be the only true representatives of Portuguese Timor."²⁰⁸

Australians in Timor, such as journalists Michael Richardson and Jill Jolliffe, and NGO staff such as David Scott of Community Aid Abroad (CAA), threatened to expose Indonesia's military activity. Therefore, the Government exerted intense pressure to force the evacuation of all Australian nationals.²⁰⁹ By 4 December, the last evacuations had occurred.²¹⁰ Australian journalist, Roger East, chose to remain. On 7 December, Indonesian military forces invaded Dili.²¹¹ The Indonesian military executed East, and closed all external access to the territory.²¹²

The Government contained the public impact in Australia. On 7 December, Peacock released a statement that expressed the Government's 'deep regret' at the breakdown of the Portuguese Administration in Timor, and sympathised that this had created difficulties for Indonesia. Although the statement reinforced Australia's commitment to self-determination, it also qualified that Australia was not a party principal, and would take no meaningful action to contest

²⁰³ "Document 343 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 20 November 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 579.

²⁰⁴ Michael Richardson, "Indonesians pound key Timor towns," *SMH*, November 26, 1975.

²⁰⁵ "Indonesia's 'patience,'" *SMH*, November 27, 1975.

²⁰⁶ "Document 349 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 29 November 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 588.

²⁰⁷ "Document 251 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 7 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 447; "Document 257 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 13 October 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 460.

²⁰⁸ "No recognition by Australia," *Canberra Times*, December 1, 1975.

²⁰⁹ David Scott, *Last Flight out of Dili: Memoirs of an accidental activist in the triumph of East Timor* (Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2005), 19, 21.

²¹⁰ "Note 4 to Document 354 Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 2 December 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 593.

²¹¹ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 44-45

²¹² Editorial, "Pleas for refuge," *Canberra Times*, December 30, 1975.

Indonesia's invasion, adding, "[i]t is obvious that the initiatives open to the Australian Government are limited. The options have closed almost to vanishing point."²¹³ Jakarta accepted that Canberra did not seriously object to the invasion.²¹⁴

The solidarity movement continued to grow. On the evening of 7 December, 300 individuals met in the boardroom of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence in Melbourne, and established the Australia East Timor Association (AETA). The AETA immediately recognised the DRET, as initiated by Fretilin, and aimed to raise domestic and international support for an independent Timor.²¹⁵

The AETA acted quickly, raising \$1000 to send David Scott to New York, and assist Fretilin to establish its first diplomatic mission at the UN Security Council.²¹⁶ The AETA held vigils outside the KLM Office on Collins St and Foreign Affairs Department on Bourke St, planned union action and demonstrations, published leaflets and prepared media releases for Australian and international outlets.²¹⁷ Activists rapidly established AETA branches in other states, which expanded these activities nation-wide.²¹⁸ On 11 December, the NSW branch organised a public meeting in Sydney, which heard a testimony about Timor from James Dunn, who had recently returned to Australia.²¹⁹

An illegal radio operation between the Northern Territory (NT) and Timor provided the only direct communication link after Indonesia's invasion. Fretilin Minister for International Affairs and Security, Alarico Fernandes, operated the radio transceiver in Timor. An evening broadcast, 'Radio Maubere,' ran on the AM band. CPA associate Brian Manning and Fretilin members Tony Belo and Estanislau da Silva operated a second, illegal two-way communication network on 5270 KHz.²²⁰ Manning and his associates taped Fernandes' radio communications, and sent them to the CIET office in Sydney. The CIET decoded and translated Fernandes' message to English, and

²¹³ "Document 360 DFA News Release, Canberra, 7 December 1975," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 604.

²¹⁴ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 151.

²¹⁵ Hill, "The NGO's and Timor," 12.

²¹⁶ "Australia East Timor Association," *Timor Information Service*, no. 4 (December 1975): 6, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_04_p.pdf

²¹⁷ "Activities," *Timor Information Service*, no. 3 (December 1975): 2, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_03_p.pdf

²¹⁸ "New Groups for East Timor," *Timor Information Service*, no. 6 (January 1975): 3, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_06_p.pdf

²¹⁹ Clinton Fernandes, "A transformational analysis of the national interest," (doctoral thesis, Deakin University, 2004), 127.

²²⁰ Rob Wesley-Smith, "Radio Maubere and Links to East Timor," in *Free East Timor: Australia's culpability in East Timor's genocide* ed. Jim Aubrey (Milsons Point, NSW: Random House Australia, 1998), 84.

circulated the messages to the solidarity network in Australia and overseas.²²¹ Ultimately, a number of radios were involved; the public receiver, 'Radio Maubere;' the 'Secret Public' receiver – 'Radio Maubere 2-way' and the 'Secret Secret' transceiver for Fretilin radio traffic only.²²²

Woolcott advised the Government to strengthen efforts to shape public understanding:

“Despite the strength of domestic pressures against Indonesia at present, Australia will still have to go on living with Indonesia and we should not lose sight of the assessment that Australia’s long term interests, as well as those of Indonesia and the region (and, conceivably, even those of the majority of the indigenous Timorese in East Timor) are now likely to be served by the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia.”²²³

The Embassy in Jakarta released a press briefing that emphasised that an independent Timor would be a non-viable state, which could have compromised “the defence of northern Australia” and would “have held out for a less generous seabed agreement than Indonesia had given off West Timor.”²²⁴

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) and Security Council debated Timor in December 1975. The Australian Delegation negotiated a mild resolution that avoided “condemnation of Indonesia,” “recognition of the so-called democratic republic” of Timor and linked Indonesia’s military withdrawal “with the programme of self-determination.”²²⁵ The AETA provided a counterpoint to Australian influence at the UN. Scott acted as an ‘advisor’ to Ramos-Horta, and helped to secure UN acceptance of Ramos-Horta as the representative of the Timorese.²²⁶ Scott wrote media releases and speeches that Ramos-Horta delivered at Security Council debates, which argued for Timor’s right to self-determination.²²⁷ At the final debate on 22 December, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 384 (1975) unanimously, which called for Indonesia’s military withdrawal and reaffirmed the Timorese right to self-determination. The Resolution instructed the UN Secretary-General to send special

²²¹ Scott, *Last Flight*, 39-40

²²² Wesley-Smith, “Radio Maubere,” 90.

²²³ “Document 365 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 9 December 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 613.

²²⁴ Hamish McDonald, “Australia supports Indonesia takeover of Timor,” *National Times*, December 15 – 20, 1975.

²²⁵ “Document 369 Cablegram to Canberra, New York, 9 December 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 617.

²²⁶ Scott, *Last Flight*, 39.

²²⁷ Ibid, 32, 36; Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 211.

representative, Winspeare Guicciardi, to Timor. However, the Security Council did little to enforce Indonesian compliance with the Resolution.²²⁸

On 17 December, Indonesia installed the Provisional Government of Timor.²²⁹ Senior Australian policymakers assessed that Indonesia would formalise the incorporation of Timor within six months.²³⁰ Renouf advised the Government,

“We should accept that incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia seems fast becoming an accomplished fact. Australia should not resist this trend and, indeed, should accept it as probably now the best solution. Otherwise we should have a running sore in the region poisoning relations between ourselves and the Indonesians for years to come... We should continue to remain as detached as we can from the Portuguese Timor problem and avoid becoming a party principal.”²³¹

The Government restricted activity in support of self-determination in Timor. On 21 January, UN special representative Guicciardi arrived in Darwin and approached the Government for assistance to visit Fretilin-held areas in Timor. On the same day, Police and Telecom Officials seized the CAP radio transmitter operating in Darwin.²³² The transmitter was the only way to contact Fretilin-held areas.²³³ Later, Peacock refused Guicciardi the use of a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) aircraft, and refused the UN’s request to restore radio communication with Fretilin.²³⁴ The Government’s strategy to isolate Fretilin functioned in tandem with Indonesian military operations, which targeted each new Fretilin-held area that Guicciardi proposed to visit. The UN abandoned the mission on 7 February.²³⁵

Australian interest groups intensified efforts to send relief and medical supplies to Timor.²³⁶ On 20 January 1976, Dr John Whitehall and Bill Bancroft (Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid

²²⁸ Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 211-212.

²²⁹ Ibid, 213.

²³⁰ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 152.

²³¹ “Document 289 Submission to Peacock, Canberra, 22 December 1975,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 647-648.

²³² Bruce Juddery, “UN Envoy seeks Australian Help. New Timor visit Sought,” *Canberra Times*, January 26, 1976

²³³ Nancy Viviani, “Australians and the Timor issue: II,” *Australian Outlook* 32, no. 3 (1978): 247, doi: 10.1080/10357717808444650

²³⁴ Creighton Burns, Michael Richardson, Russell Skelton, “Govt rejects Timor plea,” *Age*, January 29, 1976

²³⁵ Viviani, “Australians and the Timor issue: II,” 247.

²³⁶ “Australia Timor Association News Release – Sunday 29 December,” *Timor Information Service*, no. 5 (December 1975): 5-6, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_05_p.pdf

to Timor; ASIAT) attempted to transport medical supplies, a surgeon and a radio operator from Darwin to Dili. With the financial support of CAA, and accompanied by Channel 9 Journalist Gerald Stone and a Channel 9 cameraman, the ASIAT team hired the barge *Alanna Fay*. However, national broadcasters revealed the attempt hours before the departure. Ultimately, the captain returned *Alanna Fay* to Darwin under the guise of “a broken engine.”²³⁷ The Government refused permission for the barge to make a second attempt to reach Timor.²³⁸ Between February and April, the Australian Catholic Church, and 40 Australian unions, raised money to charter ships to provide aid to Timor.²³⁹ The Government refused to protect these relief ships against Indonesian attack, and both attempts had failed by late-May.²⁴⁰

The Government upheld the role of Jakarta’s ‘foreign ally’ throughout this period. At the UN Security Council Debate, the Australian Delegation again expressed significant support for Indonesian interests in Timor.²⁴¹ Between 13-15 April, Peacock visited Jakarta and finalised Australia’s second, \$25 million Defence Assistance Program to Indonesia.²⁴² ‘Business as usual’ continued in Australia’s economic relations with Indonesia. Australia’s new three year aid program to Indonesia totalled \$86 million; a 25% increase from the previous three-year package.²⁴³

Activists continued to complicate the Government’s efforts to pursue good relations with Indonesia. On 14 April, ALP Parliamentarian Ken Fry addressed the Security Council and emphasised the majority popular support for Fretilin, based on his personal observations during

²³⁷ John Whitehall, “Among the Quick and the Dead in East Timor, 1975,” *Quadrant* 54, no. 10 (2010): 36-37, <http://search.informit.com.au.wwwproxy1.library.unsw.edu.au/fullText;dn=022485291732534;res=IELLCC>

²³⁸ “Chronology of events, January 8 – January 29, 1976,” *Timor Information Service*, no.7 (February 1976): 5, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_07_p.pdf

²³⁹ Hill, “The NGO’s and Timor,” 13; “Chronology of recent events concerning Timor: Feb 19 – April 21, 1976,” *Timor Information Service*, no. 9-10 (May 1976): 9, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_09-10_p.pdf; “Chronology of recent events concerning Timor: April 22 – June 24, 1976,” *Timor Information Service*, no. 11-12 (June 1976): 10-14, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_11-12_p.pdf; “Aid to be shipped,” *Canberra Times*, April 24, 1976; “Indonesian ‘by August,’” *Canberra Times*, April 24, 1976; “Unions’ ship to dare Timor guns despite warning,” *Canberra Times*, May 6, 1976.

²⁴⁰ Viviani, “Australians and the Timor issue: II,” 249.

²⁴¹ James Dunn, *East Timor: A rough passage to independence* (Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books, 2003), 320-321.

²⁴² Bob Catley and Vinsensio Dugis, *Australian Indonesian relations since 1945: The Garuda and The Kangaroo* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 1998), 158.

²⁴³ Catley and Dugis, *Australian Indonesian relations*, 158.

his two visits to Timor in 1975.²⁴⁴ Fry's testimony challenged the Indonesian and Australian Government's assertions that Fretilin did not represent the wishes of the majority of Timorese.²⁴⁵ After returning to Australia, Fry pressured the Government to support an independent Timor, by suspending defence aid to Indonesia and increasing humanitarian aid to Timor.²⁴⁶

The solidarity movement complicated the Government's efforts to neutralise public opinion in Australia. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) launched 'Operation Answer,' and monitored the telecommunications, bank accounts and other activities of Fry and other supporters of an independent Timor.²⁴⁷ The Government's policies and actions consolidated and legitimised Indonesia's invasion of Timor.

2.5 Australian foreign policy and public opinion, April 1976 – April 1979

On 18 July, Soeharto signed the Bill to authorise Timor's incorporation as the 27th province of Indonesia.²⁴⁸ Indonesia argued that the formal and legal integration of Timor was both legitimate and complete.²⁴⁹ Australia issued a routine statement in support of a "proper act of self-determination" in Timor.²⁵⁰

Privately, the lobby moved toward recognising Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. On 2 August, General Murdani had threatened to suspend bilateral relations unless the Government altered Australia's position toward Indonesia's incorporation of Timor.²⁵¹ A policymaker at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C), Roger Holdich, warned the Government to shift Australia's policy to prevent further damage to Australia-Indonesia relations:

"Unless we change gear soon we might expect our relations with Indonesia to deteriorate substantially, possibly also affecting our relations with other South East Asian states. In

²⁴⁴ Ken Fry, *A Humble Backbencher. The memoirs of Kenneth Lionel Fry: MHR Fraser, ACT, 1974- 84* (Canberra: Ginninderra Press, 2002), 108-110.

²⁴⁵ Heike Krieger, ed., *East Timor and the International Community: Basic Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 107.

²⁴⁶ "Call for pressure on Indonesia," *Canberra Times*, April 26, 1976.

²⁴⁷ Fry, *A Humble Backbencher*, 132-134.

²⁴⁸ Part 3. "The History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 218.

²⁴⁹ "Document 484 Cablegram to Canberra, Jakarta, 17 July 1976," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 819.

²⁵⁰ "Cablegram to Jakarta, Canberra, 20 July 1976," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 824-825.

²⁵¹ Cablegram from Jakarta, Canberra, 2 August 1976. NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, Part 29 in Kimura, "Australian foreign policymaking," 265.

this we risk losing the initiative and influence in perhaps the most important aspect of our foreign policy.”²⁵³

US attitudes were influential. Washington warned Canberra to cease official criticism of Indonesia, as tension over Timor could hinder American nuclear balancing against the Soviet Union.²⁵⁴ American submarines navigated through the Ombai-Wetar straits between Indonesia and Timor, to pass between the Pacific and Indian Ocean.²⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the military stalemate between ABRI and Falintil, Fretilin’s military wing, continued. Indonesia had established limited control of the major roads along the North Coast; however, Fretilin firmly controlled large areas of Timor’s interior.²⁵⁶ Woolcott advised the Government to ‘hasten the spread of Indonesian control’ over Timor, ending the stalemate and thus avoiding a ‘running sore’ in bilateral relations.²⁵⁷ Recognising that “public opinion in Australia” would be “the most difficult problem to overcome” in taking this course of action, Holdich encouraged the Government to belatedly explain that Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor was irreversible.²⁵⁸

The Government disrupted communication between Timor and Australia. On 16 September, the HMAS *Adroit* prevented the fishing vessel *Dawn* from sailing from Darwin to Timor. Four activists - Robert Wesley-Smith, James Zantis, Harold Morris and Manolis Mavromatis – had chartered the *Dawn* to “break the blockade” of Timor, by smuggling medical supplies into the territory, and providing radio equipment to re-establish direct contact with Fretilin. The activists were charged with smuggling drugs (large supplies of medicine) and weapons (six firearms for personal protection).²⁵⁹

Surveillance activity formed an increasingly important aspect of the Government’s strategy to disrupt communications.²⁶⁰ After *Dawn*, Australia intensified surveillance of the Timor Sea to prevent further attempts to assist Fretilin.²⁶¹ ASIO, Police and Telecom officials continued surveillance efforts to locate multiple CAP radio transceivers operating in the NT.²⁶² On 27

²⁵³ “Submission to Fraser, Canberra, 6 August 1976,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 826.

²⁵⁴ Michael Richardson, “US warns Australia on Timor situation,” *SMH*, August 3, 1976.

²⁵⁵ Richardson, “US warns Australia.”

²⁵⁶ Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 219-220.

²⁵⁷ Michael Richardson, “Timor. One Year Later,” *Age*, December 7, 1976.

²⁵⁸ “Submission to Fraser, Canberra, 6 August 1976,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 826.

²⁵⁹ Scott, *Last Flight*, 174 – 176.

²⁶⁰ “Submission to Fraser, Canberra, 6 August 1976,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, 826.

²⁶¹ Surveillance of the Timor Sea, 19 November 1976, Department of Defence. NAA: A4090, 757/2/1.

²⁶² Scott, *Last Flight*, 171 – 172; Wesley-Smith, “Radio Maubere,” 90-92.

September, Telecom officials and police in Darwin again confiscated an illegal radio.²⁶³ The Government subsequently prohibited Telecom from passing Fretilin messages from Timor to recipients in Australia. Later, the Government denied Australian entry visas to Ramos-Horta and other Fretilin members claiming to represent the DRET.²⁶⁴ Despite official efforts to disrupt communication, the Radio project continued until September 1978, when ABRI forces captured Alarico Fernandes and the Fretilin Radio.²⁶⁵

The Government refused to confirm Australian support for self-determination in Timor. At the conclusion of official talks in Jakarta on 10 October, Fraser and Soeharto issued a Joint Communiqué that only noted, “Australian policy on the Timor question had been clearly set out by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Peacock) in Parliament.”²⁶⁶ The Communiqué noted that \$250,000 of humanitarian aid would be made available through the Indonesian Red Cross; a tacit expression of Australian recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.²⁶⁷ Indonesian policymakers interpreted the Communiqué as an indication that Australia accepted Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor “de facto.”²⁶⁸

The Government continued to minimise political debate about Australia’s Timor policy. In a Ministerial Statement on 20 October, Peacock asserted that, whilst the Government had “not recognised Indonesia’s incorporation of East Timor,” it had to accept “certain realities.” He continued, “It means that we must take into account Indonesia’s view that East Timor is now part of Indonesia and that this situation is not likely to change.”²⁶⁹ Australia adopted a less active role at the UN Fourth Committee, and abstained from voting on UNGA Resolution 31/53 that condemned Indonesian military intervention in Timor.²⁷⁰ Australia again abstained from the UNGA Resolution on Timor in 1977.²⁷¹

²⁶³ “Fraser says Fretilin radio link had to go,” *Age*, October 3, 1976; “Telecom order ‘from Suharto,’” *Canberra Times*, October 5, 1975.

²⁶⁴ Viviani, “Australians and the Timor issue: II,” 254.

²⁶⁵ Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 227.

²⁶⁶ “Communiqué by Fraser, Canberra, 10 October 1976,” *Australian Foreign Affairs Record* 47, no. 10 (October 1976): 539.

²⁶⁷ Michael Grattan, “PM tries to shut the Timor book,” *Age*, October 11, 1976; “Timor Fades Away,” *Canberra Times*, October 11, 1976; “Trade winds over Timor,” *Age*, October 11, 1976.

²⁶⁸ Gay Davidson, “Back from Jakarta. PM’s new denial. Timor views ‘unchanged,’” *Canberra Times*, October 12, 1976.

²⁶⁹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 20 October 1976, 2016 (Andrew Peacock).

²⁷⁰ Viviani, “Australians and the Timor issue: II,” 256.

²⁷¹ Cabinet Minute (Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee) - Decision No 4224(FAD) - Timor - Without Submission. NAA: A13075, 4224/FAD.

However, Australian public support for self-determination in Timor continued to complicate Australia's relations with Indonesia. At the end of 1976, Timorese refugees that had experienced the Indonesian invasion arrived in Lisbon.²⁷² In January 1977, James Dunn conducted interviews with approximately 200 refugees in Lisbon, on behalf of CAA and Australian Catholic Relief (ACR), and with the financial support of the ACFOA.²⁷³ The Report, submitted to both Peacock and private aid agencies, detailed Indonesian war crimes in Timor and concluded:

“The plight of these people might well constitute relatively speaking the most serious case of contravention of human rights facing the world at this time...Reports that one-sixth of the population may have been killed...serves to highlight the magnitude of the tragedy of Timor.”²⁷⁴

Dunn's Report created significant tension in Australian-Indonesian relations. Malik warned that Jakarta would permit “demonstrations and other mass actions against the Australian Embassy” if the Government did not intervene; and encouraged the Indonesian media to begin a “propaganda campaign” against Australian journalists who published “anti-Indonesian propaganda.”²⁷⁵

Dunn's report drew Timor to the forefront of domestic politics. Six ALP Parliamentarians requested an Australian Senate Select Committee of Inquiry into alleged Indonesian military atrocities in Timor.²⁷⁶ The Indonesian Embassy seriously protested the proposal and Committee Chairman, Mr Sim, argued that the inquiry would unacceptably widen the “already serious rift” with Indonesia.²⁷⁷ The vote was subsequently lost in Federal Parliament.²⁷⁸

Parliamentarians remained concerned. Six ALP Parliamentarians appealed to the US House Committee on International Relations to “explore the possibilities of taking concrete steps to stop this tragedy;” and 95 Parliamentarians petitioned US President Carter to investigate the alleged Indonesian abuse of human rights in Timor.²⁷⁹²⁸⁰ Subsequently, the US House Committee on

²⁷² Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War*, 79.

²⁷³ “Ex-consul to report on alleged Timor atrocities,” *SMH*, January 28, 1977.

²⁷⁴ Bruce Juddery, “Australian Mission to Timor ‘Duped,’” *Canberra Times*, February 23, 1977.

²⁷⁵ “Malik urges media ‘war,’” *Canberra Times*, March 31 1977; “Timor dead, ‘50, 000,’” *Canberra Times*, April 1, 1977.

²⁷⁶ “6 Labor MPs seek US intervention in Timor,” *Canberra Times*, March 1, 1977.

²⁷⁷ Sam Alaydores, “East Timorese Refugees,” *Canberra Times*, January 29, 1977; Arthur Gray, “Report Sent to Government. Indonesian rift ‘could widen,’” *Canberra Times*, March 18, 1977.

²⁷⁸ Viviani, “Australians and the Timor issue: II,” 259; “Submission to Peacock, Canberra, 17 March 1977,” in *Documents on Australian foreign policy*, 834.

²⁷⁹ “6 Labor MPs seek US intervention in Timor,” *Canberra Times*, March 1, 1977.

²⁸⁰ Ross Andrews, “Australian Evidence. US worry on East Timor,” *Canberra Times*, March 14, 1977.

International Relations established an inquiry into the reports; and arranged for James Dunn and Indonesian representatives to present evidence.²⁸¹ The inquiry did not seriously consider Dunn's Report, because of the Carter Administration's interest in strengthening relations with Indonesia.²⁸² Two subcommittee members visited Timor at Indonesia's request, and endorsed Indonesia's claims that the Timorese supported integration.²⁸³ After the inquiry, Australian media concerns over Timor declined, and reports increasingly expressed Indonesia's incorporation of Timor as a "fait accompli."²⁸⁴

2.6 Australia's recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor

In December 1977, the LNP was re-elected with a large majority.²⁸⁵ The Government defined its second term with moves toward recognising Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. In January, the Government convened the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee and agreed "Australia should no longer sustain its public objection to the integration of East Timor into Indonesia."²⁸⁷ The Government announced Australia's *de facto* recognition that "East Timor is part of Indonesia" in a press release on 20 January.²⁸⁸ In November, Australia and Indonesia agreed to begin talks on delineating the seabed boundary between Timor and Australia, amounting to Australia's *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. At the commencement of official negotiations on 14 February 1979, Australia 'slipped' into *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.²⁸⁹

This period also saw an escalating humanitarian crisis in Timor. In August 1977, ABRI launched a new military offensive, to eliminate Fretilin and force Timorese living in the mountains to surrender to ABRI controlled lowlands.²⁹⁰ ABRI used US OV-10F Bronco aircraft and napalm to

²⁸¹ Viviani, "Australians and the Timor issue: II," 257.

²⁸² "Evidence on Timor 'faulty,'" *Canberra Times*, April 16, 1977; "Information we have....does not support the charges made in general by Mr Dunn," *Canberra Times*, March 25, 1977; "Reports of genocide in East Timor exaggerated, US officials say," *Canberra Times*, March 25, 1977.

²⁸³ "Indonesians 'should have intervened earlier,'" *Canberra Times*, April 14, 1977; "East Timorese support union, America says," *Canberra Times*, April 18, 1977.

²⁸⁴ Cabinet Submission No 1865: East Timor – Australian policy – Decision 4485 (FAD). NAA: A12909, 1865.

²⁸⁵ Viviani, "Australians and the Timor issue: II," 259.

²⁸⁷ Cabinet Submission No 1865: East Timor – Australian policy – Decision 4485 (FAD). NAA: A12909, 1865.

²⁸⁸ DFA, Relations with Indonesia, news release, January 20, 1978. NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, Annex B.

²⁸⁹ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 156-157.

²⁹⁰ Part 3. "The History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 223.

destroy villages and food sources.²⁹¹ Illness and famine forced 300, 000 – 400, 000 Timorese to surrender by early 1979.²⁹² ABRI detained the surrendering population in transit camps, and later dispatched detainees to resettlement camps.²⁹³ ABRI's control over civilian movements including farming, and inadequate food, medicine, sanitation and shelter, caused a famine in which tens of thousands of Timorese died.²⁹⁴ Fretilin President Nicolau Lobato was killed on 31 December 1978.²⁹⁵ In March 1979, ABRI declared the territory 'pacified.'²⁹⁷

Canberra consistently received, and ignored, briefing notes about the humanitarian crisis in Timor. In June 1978, Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia, Thomas Critchley met General Yusuf, the Minister for Defence and Commander of the Armed Forces, who had recently returned from Timor. Yusuf told Critchley that "270, 000 women and children" had become "separated from their menfolk" and that Indonesia would "welcome" assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Critchley appeared to accept that a major humanitarian crisis was developing in Timor:

"It is difficult to avoid the feeling that the call was arrangement hurriedly and for a special reason... He [Yusuf] was well briefed and in command of his subject – Timor."

Critchley then dismissed Yusuf's appeal as an "ad hoc reaction" to the crisis that was not "official policy."²⁹⁸

The briefings also included eyewitness accounts of Embassy staff. In August, Mr D. Campbell and Mr. P Alexander visited West Timor in the context of an Australian aid proposal to Indonesia. The diplomats viewed recent photos of "sick, starving, and malnourished women and children" in Timor, noted that the Indonesian military was "doing almost nothing" to alleviate the suffering, and estimated that "the death rate was around 8% per month" in some groups.²⁹⁹ Between 7 – 8 September, Ambassador Critchley and nine other foreign ambassadors visited Timor. An Indonesian official briefed the Ambassadors that approximately 125, 000 Timorese had

²⁹¹ Ibid, 224, 226.

²⁹² Part 7.3. "Forced Displacement and Famine," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1226-1227.

²⁹³ Ibid, 52-64.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 149.

²⁹⁵ Part 3. "The History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 227.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Record of Conversation with General M. Yusuf, Minister for Defence and Commander of the Armed Forces, 30 June 1978. NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3 Part 24.: Indonesia: Relations with Portuguese Timor.

²⁹⁹ Foreign Affairs cable from Jakarta to Canberra, 15 August 1978. NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3 Part 24: Indonesia: Relations with Portuguese Timor.

surrendered and that as many as one quarter suffered from advanced malnutrition and disease.³⁰⁰ Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Correspondent in Jakarta, Warwick Beutler, called for an international relief effort to alleviate the “major humanitarian problem” in Timor.³⁰¹ The Embassy pressed the Government to “make it clear that the problem is not repeat not of Indonesia’s making,” and that Timor “was a poverty stricken country before the civil war started.”³⁰²

Australia took no meaningful action to alleviate the military-induced famine in Timor until ABRI consented. Senior ABRI officials were highly sensitive to international observers and foreign assistance that would expose ongoing military operations in Timor.³⁰³ Furthermore, ABRI would not allow international humanitarian aid into Timor until it achieved its military objectives. Critchley argued that international assistance would be counterproductive to Indonesian objectives, and noted that “If the Timorese are to become loyal Indonesians” after surrender, then “the Indonesian Government must get the credit for relief and development work.”³⁰⁴ The CRS and ICRC did not begin to deliver aid in Timor until September 1979. By this time, at least 55% of Timor’s surviving population were ‘seriously or critically malnourished.’³⁰⁵

In Australia, activists attempted to mobilise public pressure on the Government to provide humanitarian assistance to Timor. In July 1979, the ACFOA published Pat Walsh’s report of the humanitarian crisis, *Aid and East Timor*, and sent copies to Parliamentarians, churches and overseas interest groups in an attempt to mobilise a domestic and international response.³⁰⁶ On 1 November 1979, the *Age* published photographs of emancipated Timorese children, which former diplomat and journalist Peter Rogers had sent out of the territory.³⁰⁷ The photographs vindicated the ACFOA’s report and mobilised public opinion.³⁰⁸ The ACFOA called on the Government to provide \$1 million to the ICRC program, and press Indonesia to grant Australian aid agencies

³⁰⁰ Part 7.3. “Forced Displacement and Famine,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1236-1237.

³⁰¹ Fernandes, “Accomplice to Mass Atrocities,” 8.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Foreign Affairs cable from Jakarta to Canberra, 15 August 1978. NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3 Part 24: Indonesia: Relations with Portuguese Timor.

³⁰⁴ Fernandes, “Accomplice to Mass Atrocities,” 8.

³⁰⁵ Part 7.3. “Forced Displacement and Famine,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1255.

³⁰⁶ Pat Walsh, *Aid and East Timor* (Canberra: ACFOA, 1979).

³⁰⁷ Peter Rogers, “Horror on our doorstep,” *Age*, November 1, 1979.

³⁰⁸ Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 231.

access to Timor.³⁰⁹ Parliamentarians proposed a fact-finding mission to Timor that would ensure the transparent distribution of aid.³¹⁰

The Government tried to contain the public impact in Australia, contributing \$2 million to Indonesia's relief effort to satisfy public concern.³¹¹ The DFA argued against the use of RAAF helicopters to distribute aid in Timor, citing unacceptable "popular appeal within Australia" and "presentational difficulties" for Indonesia. The Government deflected domestic criticism of Indonesia by emphasising "the positive question" of Indonesian and Australian assistance, avoiding "discussion of how many people died," and arguing that Indonesia had inherited a "civil war" and were "doing their best" to restore security in Timor. Australia's public statements functioned in tandem with Indonesia, who declared that drought and subsistence farming practices had caused the famine.³¹⁴

The conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion continued until the end of the Fraser Government's term. In 1981, ABRI launched *Operation Security* to eliminate Falintil and kill or capture Falintil Commander -in-Chief, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão (Xanana). ABRI marched 60, 000 civilians across Timor in "fences" to trap and capture the Resistance. ABRI's campaign disrupted the planting season and created potential famine conditions.³¹⁵ The Apostolic Administrator of Dili, Monsignor Martino da Costa Lopes, wrote to ACR Chairman Bishop John Gerry, detailing Indonesian military campaigns, the massacre of 500 Timorese civilians at Lacluta in September, and the potential for famine.³¹⁶ On 11 January, the SMH published Lopes' letter.³¹⁷ ACR, AFFET and ACFOA swiftly pressured the Government to provide immediate relief.³¹⁸ Senators argued that Australia must support self-determination in Timor, at the UNGA in November.³¹⁹

³⁰⁹ "Call for \$1 million aid for East Timor," *Canberra Times*, November 2, 1979.

³¹⁰ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 6 November 1979, 2592 (Michael Hodgman); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 8 November 1979, 2765 (Tom Uren).

³¹¹ "Government doubles aid to East Timor," *Canberra Times*, November 7, 1979.

³¹⁴ Fernandes, "Accomplice to Mass Atrocities," 10.

³¹⁵ Part 3. "History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 237-238, 240-241.

³¹⁶ Patrick A Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow: The Catholic Church and the East Timor issue* (Münster: Lit, 2004), 38

³¹⁷ "Church aid plea blames Indonesian troops. Famine looms in East Timor," *SMH*, January 11, 1982.

³¹⁸ "Backing for Timor Plea," *NT News*, January 11, 1982; "Chronology of recent events," *Timor Information Service*, no. 34 (January- February 1982): 9, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_34_p.pdf

³¹⁹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 23 February 1982, 307 (Senator Mason).

The lobby moved swiftly to legitimise Indonesian Administration in Timor. On 12 January, the SMH published an Editorial, which praised Indonesian efforts to overcome “Portuguese cruelty and colonial neglect” in Timor, and questioned Lopes’ “accuracy and motives.” The author warned that “the real issue” was Australia’s “nagging and relentless criticism” of Timor, which had caused a “running ulcer” in Australia-Indonesia relations.³²⁰ In the Senate, the Government dismissed support for self-determination in Timor as “unrealistic,” arguing that Indonesia was the authority in effective control and that Australia would vote against the UNGA Resolution in November 1982.³²¹

Gough Whitlam led efforts to neutralise domestic criticism of Indonesia. Between 1 - 4 March, Whitlam, accompanied by SMH Journalist Peter Hastings and Cedric Neukomm, the ICRC Delegate in Jakarta, visited eight towns in Timor. At a Press Conference in Jakarta on 5 May, Whitlam stated that the Indonesian Administration was in firm control of Timor, that Fretilin resistance was limited and that there were no signs of famine.³²² After returning to Australia, Whitlam denounced Lopes as a “liar” and “a mendacious and malicious correspondent,” who had written an “alarmist, inaccurate letter” to ACR.³²³ On 14 May, Whitlam repeated his findings at the first session of the Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into human rights in Timor.³²⁴ Throughout, Whitlam claimed that the visit to Timor had operated “entirely under the auspices of ICRC” to reinforce the authority of his conclusions.³²⁵ In fact, General Ali Murtopo, an architect of Indonesian’s 1975 invasion and chair of the CSIS – the think-tank directly connected with Indonesian special operations in Timor – had orchestrated the visit.³²⁶

The solidarity movement confronted Whitlam at each turn. In March, activists published detailed commentary about Indonesian military campaigns and the humanitarian situation in Timor, which directly contradicted Whitlam’s report, reinforced the integrity of da Costa Lopes and transformed

³²⁰ Editorial, “Timor Trench,” *SMH*, January 12, 1982.

³²¹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 23 February 1982, 307 (Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs).

³²² “Transcript of Whitlam/Hastings press conference, Jakarta, 5 March 1982,” Australian Information Service Backgrounder, CHART, accessed August 9, 2017, https://timorarchives.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/eto_w-h_12.pdf

³²³ Gough Whitlam, interview by Richard Andrews, *Frontline*, ABC Radio, March 26, 1982, Radio broadcast transcript, https://timorarchives.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/eto_w-h_09.pdf. See also, Gough Whitlam, “Gough Whitlam: The Truth about Timor,” *Bulletin*, March 30, 1982.

³²⁴ Fernandes, “A transformational analysis,” 165.

³²⁵ “Gough Whitlam fails to convince,” *Timor Information Service*, no. 35 (March-April 1982): 7, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_35_p.pdf

³²⁶ Ibid.

public understanding.³²⁷ Representatives from the Timorese community, Church, Amnesty International, Aid agencies, universities and interest groups presented evidence about Indonesian human rights violations in Timor at the Senate Inquiry.³²⁸ The Inquiry forced the Hawke Government to send a Parliamentary Delegation to Timor to dispute the evidence, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

Whitlam acted to secure international recognition of Indonesian Administration in Timor at the UN. In November, Whitlam petitioned the Fourth Committee to remove Timor from the UNGA agenda, based on the “expertise” he gained after visiting Timor. Whitlam argued, “Most petitioners...have never been to East Timor...At least I have been there as recently as last March.” Whitlam repeated that the visit operated under the auspices of an ICRC Delegate that had lived in Timor for three years and spoke the Indonesian language.³²⁹

A well-organised campaign confronted Whitlam at the Committee. ALP Parliamentarian Gordon McIntosh, who had visited Timor in 1975, presented a letter signed by 95% of ALP Parliamentarians that affirmed their support for self-determination in Timor. McIntosh ended his presentation by playing a tape of the last words of Greg Shackleton, extracted from the last film he recorded before Indonesian troops executed him at Balibo in October 1975.³³⁰ From Australia, 22 trade unions, NGOs including ACFOA, CAA and AUS, and the Timorese Community in Melbourne, lobbied the UN Secretary-General to ensure that Timor remained on the UNGA agenda.³³¹ International Delegates supported the efforts of Australian activists at the Fourth Committee. The ICRC Delegate refuted Whitlam’s account of the visit to Timor; asserting that the ICRC did not organise the visit, that he was based in Jakarta, and that his knowledge of the Indonesian language was irrelevant, because a minority of Timorese spoke “Bahasa Indonesia.”³³²

The UNGA Resolution passed with a narrow majority of 50 votes in favour, 46 against and 50 states abstaining. The UNGA Resolution instructed the Secretary General to consult ‘all parties directly concerned’ to resolve the conflict.³³³ The Fraser Government dismissed the 1982 UNGA

³²⁷ James Dunn, “Disturbing visit to East Timor,” *Age*, March 17, 1983; Shirley Shackleton, letter to the editor, *Bulletin*, April 20, 1982; Pat Walsh, “Timor Report: Whitlam and Hastings Observed,” *Arena*, no. 60 (1982): 136-145.

³²⁸ Part 7.1. “The Right to Self-determination,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 718.

³²⁹ José Ramos-Horta, *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (Trenton, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1987), 129-130.

³³⁰ Ramos-Horta, *Funu*, 131.

³³¹ “United Nations: East Timor Resolution Survives,” *Timor Information Service*, no. 39 (November – December 1982): 2, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/tis_39_p.pdf

³³² Ramos-Horta, *Funu*, 130.

³³³ “United Nations: East Timor Resolution Survives,” *Timor Information Service*, no. 39.

Resolution. In January 1983, Defence Minister Ian Sinclair visit Timor, in a tacit confirmation of Australia's *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty.³³⁴ Clearly, the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion would continue.

By 1983, an Australian policy to support Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and neutralise public opinion, was firmly established. Activists exposed Indonesian military force in Timor at critical points throughout this period, mobilising public opinion, straining Australia-Indonesia relations and fulfilling Pritchett's prediction.

³³⁴ William Pinwill, "Timor takeover approval sealed by Sinclair visit," *Australian*, February 3, 1983.

Chapter 3: Australian Foreign Policy, 1983 – 1996

The ALP, led by Bob Hawke, was elected to Government on 5 March 1983. The Hawke Government implemented a long-term strategy to reverse the ALP National Conference Resolution (1982) and recognise Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. In July 1983, an Australian Parliamentary Delegation visited Timor and reported that the Indonesian Administration was in effective control. The Hawke Government recognised Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1986. In 1989, Australia and Indonesia signed the *Timor Gap Zone of Co-operation Treaty*; the first international agreement founded upon the principle of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.

Activists in Australia re-established contact with Fretilin in Timor during this period. The solidarity movement exposed ongoing Indonesian military campaigns inside Timor, which transformed public understanding about Indonesian Administration and re-energised public opposition to Australian foreign policy. The bipartisan consensus in Australian foreign policy was critical to moderating the impact of critical public opinion on Australia-Indonesia relations.

The Labor Party led by Paul Keating came to Government on 20 December 1991. The Government concealed Indonesian military involvement at Santa Cruz, and strengthened Australia's defence relations with Indonesia. However, the visibility of the Santa Cruz massacre in Australia commanded public attention, and caused the solidarity movement to accelerate and grow. Public support for self-determination in Timor, and opposition to Australia's co-operative relations with Indonesia, caused a series of diplomatic embarrassments for Australia and Indonesia during the Keating Government's last year in office.

3.1 The 1983 cabinet decision

After the Federal Election, the Hawke Government implemented a strategy to reverse the 35th National Conference Resolution (1982 Resolution) as Government policy and recognise Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. The 1982 Resolution condemned the Fraser Government's *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in January 1979 and outlined the ALP's firm support for an act of self-determination in Timor. The Resolution stated:

“The ALP recognises the inalienable right of the East Timorese to self-determination and independence and condemns and rejects the Australian Government’s recognition of the Indonesian annexation of East Timor.”³³⁵

Policies that reinforced the ALP’s platform included the suspension of Australian military assistance to Indonesia, pending the withdrawal of Indonesian occupation forces from Timor. In addition, the ALP proposed a Parliamentary Delegation to ascertain the facts about the humanitarian conditions in Timor that would inform the ALP’s future platform.³³⁶

The first step in the Government’s strategy to reverse the 1982 Resolution was the 29 March 1983 Cabinet Decision. The Cabinet reaffirmed “the need to maintain friendly and co-operative relations with Indonesia.”³³⁷ The Cabinet withdrew support for self-determination in Timor, agreeing,

“Australia notes that Indonesia has incorporated East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia, and it will raise with the Indonesian Government its deep concern that an internationally supervised act of self-determination has not taken place in East Timor.”³³⁸

The Cabinet agreed to maintain Australia’s existing programs, projects and exchanges, including defence co-operation, with Indonesia.³³⁹ Finally, the Cabinet agreed that a Parliamentary Delegation would visit Timor, which would inform the Government’s future policy.³⁴⁰

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, encouraged the Cabinet to recognise Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor. Hayden argued that a policy of self-determination would be “certain to fail,” because Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor was an “irreversible fact.” Hayden warned that Indonesia would retaliate against Australia, using “tough and punitive” measures that would cause major damage to bilateral relations.³⁴¹ Due to Indonesia’s importance to Australia, the Cabinet rejected the 1982 Resolution, recognised Indonesia’s incorporation of Timor and maintained Australia’s existing co-operative relations with Indonesia.

³³⁵ ALP, *Australian Labor Party Platform, Constitution & Rules as approved by the 35th National Conference* (Canberra: ALP, 1982), 81.

³³⁶ ALP, *The 35th National Conference*, 81

³³⁷ Cabinet Minute. Decision No. 116. Canberra, 29 March 1983. NAA: A13977, 12.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Cabinet Submission. Australian Policy on Indonesia – Timor. NAA: A13977, 12.

Hawke did not confirm the ALP's support for self-determination in Timor after the Federal Election. In an interview with ABC Radio on 11 March, Hawke asserted,

"What the realities are is that it would be quite inappropriate for Australia to not have good relations with such a populous, economically and strategically important country such as Indonesia – right on our doorstep. Therefore, my government and Bill Hayden, my Foreign Minister, will be moving to try and re-establish, on the best possible basis, those relations."³⁴³

The continuity in Australian foreign policy frustrated the AETA and the 'East Timor Support Group' within the Victorian Branch of the ALP, who wrote seven of the principal policy statements adopted in the 1982 Resolution.³⁴⁴ On 9 March, Pat Walsh and John Waddingham (AETA) sought nation-wide participants for strategy meeting at the Action for World Development (AWD) Office in Melbourne, to discuss how to defend self-determination in Timor.³⁴⁵ In the following months, interest groups wrote letters of concern to ALP Parliamentarians, held meetings and distributed pamphlets to pressure the Government to adopt the 1982 Resolution as official policy.³⁴⁶³⁴⁷ Journalists were overwhelmingly sympathetic to public concern about the Government's policy reversal.³⁴⁸ Michelle Grattan wrote,

"The Prime Minister sheds inappropriate policies like the old clothes they are: colourful items that might be worn in Opposition but which look decidedly garish in Government...Each policy has been declared irrelevant or delayed by the Labor Government in its first three months."³⁴⁹

³⁴³ Colin Brammal, "Government hopes to heal relations with Indonesia," *Canberra Times*, March 12, 1983.

³⁴⁴ "The Australian Labor Party & East Timor. Suggestions for a New Policy," AETA, CHART, accessed July 16, 2017, https://timorarchives.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/tis-12-02_01_p.pdf

³⁴⁵ "Letter seeking participants for March 19 Strategy Meeting in Melbourne," Pat Walsh and John Waddingham, CHART, accessed July 16, 2017, https://timorarchives.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/eto-22-104_09_p.pdf

³⁴⁶ See "Letter to Bill Hayden," AETA et al., CHART, accessed July 16, 2017, https://timorarchives.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/eto-22-104_07_p.pdf

³⁴⁷ AETA, *East Timor, Casualty in the Arms Race* (Fitzroy, VIC: 1983); AETA, *East Timor Policy. How it is being dumped* (Fitzroy, VIC: 1983).

³⁴⁸ Gay Davidson, "Status quo on incorporation to stay. Hayden sidesteps ALP Timor Policy," *Canberra Times*, April 9, 1983; Michelle Grattan and Russell Barton, "Switch will spark row in Labor Party," *Age*, June 6, 1983; Mike Steketee, "Hawke rewrites ALP's rules," *SMH*, June 6, 1983; Mike Steketee, "Timor, Viet aid: Hawke goes alone," *SMH*, June 6, 1983.

³⁴⁹ Michelle Grattan, "Hawke turns foreign policy on its head," *Age*, June 6, 1983.

Sustained domestic concern about Timor increased the pressure on the Parliamentary Delegation to provide a favourable report about Indonesian Administration, and neutralise public opinion.

3.2 The Parliamentary Delegation to Timor

A Parliamentary Delegation, led by Defence Minister Bill Morrison, visited Timor and Indonesia between 22 July and 4 August 1983. A favourable report about Indonesian Administration in Timor would enable the Government to reverse the 1982 Resolution and recognise Indonesian sovereignty. As Hawke argued:

“It is quite unreal for Australia to believe it can...in perpetuity...treat them [Indonesia] as an inferior government, because of something that has happened in the past. We have to restore full normal relations and try to do it in a way which involves a recognition [of] the realities of the present.”³⁵⁰

A favourable report could also overcome Timor as a cause for conflict in Australia-Indonesia relations. The Delegated noted:

“The Indonesians certainly regard the Timor question as a critical test of Australian-Indonesian relations, indicating that if differences persist the whole relationship will suffer.”³⁵¹

Accordingly, the report of the Parliamentary Delegation whitewashed Indonesian military strategy in Timor.

The Delegation deflected criticism of Indonesian Administration in Timor, arguing that the Timorese had “traditionally” experienced “precarious food supplies and nutritional deficiencies” due to “subsistence farming” practices and the “difficult climatic conditions.”³⁵³ Indonesia had “inherited” these adverse conditions, after Portugal abandoned the colony in 1975.³⁵⁴ The Delegation dismissed claims that Indonesian military campaigns had created potential famine

³⁵⁰ Michael Richardson, “Timor seven to join families in Australia,” *Age*, March 14, 1983.

³⁵¹ William Lawrence Morrison, *Official Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Indonesia, July-August 1983: Led by the Honourable W.L. Morrison* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983), 3.

³⁵³ Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation*, 67.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 61.

conditions and praised Indonesia's "disproportionate" development assistance, which had stimulated the economy and provided social services.³⁵⁵

The Delegation argued that there was no committed, armed resistance to integration with Indonesia. The Indonesian Administration was reported to be "in effective control" of the province; the internal situation was secure; there were "no obvious signs of security problems;" there was no need for military escort; and there was a "relaxed atmosphere" overall.³⁵⁶ Fretilin numbers had dramatically declined.³⁵⁷

The Delegation favourably reported on the agreement for a ceasefire between ABRI and Falintil, signed in May 1983.³⁵⁸ Timor's Governor, Mario Carrascalao, reassured the Delegation that ABRI forces would not capture Fretilin, who would peacefully surrender "in three to four weeks" time.³⁵⁹ Colonel Purwanto, the Commander of ABRI forces in Timor, similarly reported that Indonesia had offered Fretilin amnesty, and the ceasefire had no time limit.³⁶⁰ The Delegation concluded that the ceasefire was an important step in negotiations that would resolve the conflict in Timor.

Fretilin representatives did intercept Morrison's convoy, as it travelled during one of the two overland trips during the four-day visit. The representatives presented a letter to the Delegation, which explained that ABRI forces were continuing to target Fretilin members despite the ceasefire agreement, and urged Australia to resolve the conflict in Timor based on an act of self-determination.³⁶¹ During the exchange, Morrison dismissed evidence of ongoing resistance to integration with Indonesia, questioning the representatives:

"What is the reason you want to stay in the jungle when there's [sic] only so few of you?"

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 61-62.

³⁵⁶ Ibid, 77 – 78.

³⁵⁷ "Appendix 26. Record of Conversation with the Bupati of Ainaro, Ainaro, 31 July 1983," in Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation*, 180-181.

³⁵⁸ Part 3. "The History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 251.

³⁵⁹ "Appendix 21. Record of Meeting with the Governor of Timor Timur (Timor) Mr Mario Viegas Carrascalao, Dili, 28 July 1983," in Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation*, 162

³⁶⁰ "Appendix 29. Record of Briefing from Colonel Purwanto, Military Commander of Timor, Dili, 1 August 1983," in Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation*, 190.

³⁶¹ "Appendix E. Translation of Letter from Fretilin by K. Reppter (Canberra)," in Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation*, 169-170.

“Fretilin does not occupy a strong position and your position is very weak. Why do you think you can win?”³⁶²

The Delegation did not contact Fretilin after the exchange, maintaining that the ceasefire was a conciliatory gesture to resolve the conflict in Timor.

The solidarity movement challenged the Delegation’s conclusions. Journalists published reports about a future Indonesian military offensive in Timor; based on letters from Xanana to the AETA, statements by Ramos-Horta and Timorese refugees in Lisbon, and Church sources in Timor.³⁶³ Ken Fry and two visiting Fretilin representatives to Australia, Mr Abilio Araujo and Rogue Rodriguez, similarly warned the Government about Indonesian military plans.³⁶⁴

Morrison denied these reports at a Press Conference in Jakarta on 3 August, boasting:

“We have one advantage over Mr Fry and Mr Araujo... We have just been there and we have seen for our own eyes and we have discussed with the Governor, with the military commander. I have already detailed the military commander’s attitude and his mode of operations. Certainly nothing we saw, nothing we were told there, gives any credence to that report.”³⁶⁶

The military build-up began two days after the Delegation’s departure from Indonesia. General Murdani authorised *Operasi Persatuan* (Operation Unity) on 17 August, Indonesia’s Independence Day.³⁶⁷ Indonesian troops entered the village of Kraras, burnt houses and executed the four to five villagers who remained. Thereafter, Indonesian soldiers conducted patrols throughout the Viqueque district, capturing and executing hundreds of refugees from Kraras.³⁶⁸ Taylor concluded that Delegation’s Report, “fitted neatly into a military-generated mythical picture which it had helped to reproduce.”³⁷⁰

³⁶² “Appendix 24B. Transcript of Chance Meeting between Fretilin and Morrison – Mr Lombard’s Tape,” in Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation* 157-60.

³⁶³ “Timor. Fretilin fears new bloodbath,” *Canberra Times*, August 3, 1983.

³⁶⁴ “Timor. Fretilin fears new bloodbath.”

³⁶⁶ “Appendix 35. Transcript of Delegation Press Conference at the DPR/MPR, Jakarta, 3 August 1983,” in Morrison, *Australian Parliamentary Delegation*, 213.

³⁶⁷ Taylor, *Indonesia’s Forgotten War*, 143.

³⁶⁸ Part 7.2. “Unlawful Killings and Enforced Displacement,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 972-975.

³⁷⁰ Taylor, *Indonesia’s Forgotten War*, 142.

3.3 Recognising Indonesian sovereignty in Timor

The solidarity movement intensified pressure on the Government to support self-determination in Timor. In May 1984, activists invited a Fretilin delegation led by Ramos-Horta to Australia, to participate in a nationwide information campaign, and lobby ALP Parliamentarians.³⁷¹

The activities of the solidarity movement caused serious tension in Australia-Indonesia relations. Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar warned Canberra that the decision to receive Ramos-Horta was a “serious action” that injured “Indonesian feelings,” and that a pro- Timor platform in the 1984 Resolution would result in a major diplomatic rift.³⁷² Mochtar threatened to suspend negotiations over the Timor Gap, if Australia revoked *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.³⁷³ Hawke appealed to the ALP to avoid an “inflammatory” Timor policy and maintain “constructive relations with Indonesia.”³⁷⁵

The 1984 Resolution withdrew support for “the inalienable right of the East Timorese to self-determination and independence” and withdrew the call for Indonesia’s military withdrawal from Timor. The Resolution was conciliatory toward Indonesia:

“The ALP expresses its officially stated concern at the situation in East Timor, particularly its officially stated objection to the fact that the former Portuguese colony was incorporated without the East Timorese people having been given an adequate opportunity to express their own wishes through an internationally supervised act of self-determination.”³⁷⁶

The report of the Parliamentary Delegation was critical for the Government to argue that the situation in Timor had changed, and alter the ALP Platform. At the National Conference debate on Timor on 11 July, Morrison had argued that the majority of the Timorese supported integration with Indonesia, citing that “Fretilin represents only 1% of the people of Timor.”³⁷⁸ To underline the reversal of the 1982 Resolution based on the Delegation’s favourable report, the Government appointed Morrison as Australian Ambassador to Indonesia.³⁷⁹

³⁷¹ Scott, *Last flight*, 282.

³⁷² Pat Walsh, “ALP Conference: A requiem for Timor?” *Inside Indonesia*, no. 3 (1984): 20.

³⁷³ Peter Hastings, “Indonesia tells Aust to cool it,” *SMH*, 29 June 1984.

³⁷⁵ Walsh, “ALP Conference,” 20.

³⁷⁶ ALP, *Australian Labor Party: Platform, constitution and rules as approved by the 36th National Conference 1984* (Barton, ACT.: ALP, 1986), 101.

³⁷⁸ Walsh, “ALP Conference,” 22.

³⁷⁹ Cotton, *East Timor*, 41.

Activists dramatically undermined the Government's policy. In January 1985, activists in Darwin re-established radio contact with Fretilin in Timor. On 26 May, journalists, politicians and interested Australians attended the 'opening ceremony' of the radio link.³⁸⁰ The CIET newsletter, *East Timor News* (ETN; 1977 – 1985), began publishing reports about Indonesian military campaigns and human rights violations in Timor, based on radio communications with Falintil.³⁸¹ Australian newspapers reproduced CIET reports, drawing mainstream attention back to Timor.³⁸² In June, ABC Journalist Tony Watkins interviewed Xanana over the radio link, and published a detailed account of Timor's independence campaign.³⁸³ Hayden argued that the allegations of Indonesian atrocities were "grossly exaggerated" and demanded a report into the new radio link.³⁸⁴ The Government refused to approve a licence for the radio.³⁸⁵

The bipartisan consensus assisted the Government to neutralise public opinion and recognise Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. In July 1985, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, John Howard, recognised Indonesia's incorporation of Timor; argued that a stable relationship with Indonesia was of primary importance to Australia; and encouraged the Government to detach itself from the 'irritant' of Timor.³⁸⁶ In July 1986, the ALP recognised Indonesian sovereignty in Timor, based on the Fraser Government's *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1979, and the negotiations over the Timor Gap that had continued on this basis. The 1986 Resolution noted:

"The Australian Government has since 1979 recognised *de jure* the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia and while it accepts this reality it nonetheless expresses its concern at the way in which that incorporation has proceeded."³⁸⁸

³⁸⁰ "East Timor Calling... Radio contact re-established with Fretilin forces in East Timor," *East Timor News*, no. 83-85 (Winter 1985): 1, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/etn_83-85-p.pdf

³⁸¹ For an example, see "Detailed report of war in East Timor: March – April 1985," *East Timor News*, no. 86-88 (Spring 1985): 2, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/etn_86-88-p.pdf

³⁸² Bruce Best, "Cabinet wary of Fretilin supporters' radio move," *Age*, June 28, 1985; Karen Cooke, "Fretilin Chief Urges Amnesty visit," *Age*, June 17, 1985; Robin Osborne, "Australia 'gags' East Timor," *National Times*, August 23-29, 1985.

³⁸³ "Xanana answers questions by ABC Radio: Genocide and concentration camps cannot stop resistance," *East Timor News*, no. 86-88 (Spring 1985): 3-4, 10-11, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/etn_86-88-p.pdf

³⁸⁴ Liz Glasgow, "Fretilin atrocities claim 'exaggerated,'" *Australian*, May 28, 1985.

³⁸⁵ "Govt. refuses Timor Radio license," *East Timor News*, no. 86-88 (Spring 1985): 12, https://chartperiodicals.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/etn_86-88-p.pdf

³⁸⁶ John Howard, "It's time we made it up with the Indonesians," *Australian*, July 6, 1985; Leigh Mackay, "Timor annexation should not be irritant, says Howard," *Australian*, June 13, 1985.

³⁸⁸ ALP, *The 37th National Conference Resolution*, 143.

In October 1989, Australia and Indonesia reached an agreement for a zone of co-operation in the Timor Gap, the first international agreement founded on the principle of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.³⁸⁹ The *Timor Gap Treaty* reinforced the bipartisan agreement to pursue good relations with Indonesia by supporting Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. The Preamble of the Treaty confirmed that the agreement would "contribute to the strengthening of relations" between Australia and Indonesia.³⁹⁰

3.4 The Santa Cruz massacre

Timor's independence campaign continued throughout the 1980s. In 1988, Xanana formed the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM); a structural organisation that coordinated all aspects of resistance.³⁹¹ CNRM provided a focal point for student political organisations that had emerged in Timor in the mid-1980s, including the national-based organisation Timor-Leste Catholic Youth Organisation (*Organisacao de Juventude de Timor Leste*; OJECTIL).³⁹²

On 1 January 1989, Indonesia granted access to Timor for the first time since December 1975.³⁹³ The resistance exploited the opportunity to attract international attention to Timor. On 12 October 1989, Timorese students held a pro-independence demonstration after a Mass held by Pope John Paul II at Taci Tolu.³⁹⁴ The students unfurled banners with slogans written in Portuguese including "Viva Fretilin" and "Pope, Save Timor;" shouted slogans in Portuguese including, "long-live Fretilin;" and clashed with Indonesian security forces.³⁹⁵ The independence demonstration was the first to occur at an international visit since December 1975 and was highly embarrassing to Indonesia.³⁹⁶ An immediate and severe military crackdown followed.³⁹⁷ However, students held a second major demonstration in Dili in January 1990, to coincide with the visit of the US Ambassador to Indonesia. US Diplomats and Australian tourists witnessed ABRI forces violently disperse the demonstrators.³⁹⁸ In 1991, students began preparations for a third, large pro-

³⁸⁹ Cotton, *East Timor*, 43.

³⁹⁰ *Treaty between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Zone of cooperation in an area between the Indonesian Province of Timor and Northern Australia*, signed 11 December 1989, [1991] ATS 9 (entered into force 9 February 1991).

³⁹¹ Part 5. "Resistance: Structure and Strategy," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 457.

³⁹² Part 3. "The History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 258.

³⁹³ Part 7.1. "The Right to Self Determination," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 723.

³⁹⁴ Louise Williams, "Youths clash with police at Pope's Mass," *SMH*, October 13, 1989.

³⁹⁵ Williams, "Youths clash."

³⁹⁶ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 84.

³⁹⁷ Clyde Haberman, "Fears Expressed for 40 East Timor Protestors," *New York Times*, October 19, 1989.

³⁹⁸ Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War*, 202.

independence demonstration to coincide with the visit of the Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation to Dili, on 3 November.³⁹⁹

The Catholic Church drew diplomatic attention to Timor. On 6 February 1989, Bishop Belo appealed to UN Secretary-General Cuéllar to initiate directly a genuine act of self-determination in Timor. Belo refuted Indonesia's claim that the Timorese chose to integrate with Indonesia in July 1976 and exposed Indonesian military oppression inside the territory, writing, "We continue to die as a people and as a nation."⁴⁰¹ The visible resistance challenged Indonesia's claims of 'normalisation' in Timor, and created an image of the Resistance that was united, capable and supported by the majority of Timorese.

Australian activists drew public attention to Timor's independence campaign. The AETA published the first Tetum-English Dictionary, authored by Cliff Morris (2nd/2nd Commando Association), to facilitate communication between Timor and Australia.⁴⁰³ On 27 September 1990, Australian lawyer and activist Robert Domm travelled to Falintil's military headquarters at Leolima, and interviewed Xanana on behalf of the ABC. Xanana emphasised popular support for an independent Timor stating,

"The fact that we've resisted for 15 years now and we're still able to cry out that we are determined to win, it's because our people demand this, our homeland asks us...[the difficulties] only strengthen our unity..."⁴⁰⁵

The interview with Xanana, broadcast on ABC Radio in October, was critical to focusing domestic and international attention on self-determination in Timor.⁴⁰⁶

In August 1991, Jakarta and Lisbon commenced negotiations for a Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation to Timor, which would enable the parties to reach an agreement to resolve the conflict based on Indonesian sovereignty.⁴⁰⁷ Indonesian diplomats refused to allow Australian journalist

³⁹⁹ Part 7.2. "Unlawful Killings and Enforced Disappearances," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1006.

⁴⁰¹ Arnold S. Kohen, *From The Place of the Dead: The Epic Struggles of Bishop Belo of East Timor* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 137.

⁴⁰³ Part 7.1. "The Right to Self-determination," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 725.

⁴⁰⁵ "An interview with Xanana Gusmao," *East Timor. Keeping the Flame of Freedom Alive. ACFOA Development Dossier* 29 (1991): 22.

⁴⁰⁶ Tony Jones, "Reporter who was smuggled into East Timor to interview Xanana Gusmo in 1990 is reunited with the former resistance leader," *Lateline*, Mark Adams, aired November 12 (Australia: ABC TV, 2015), television program transcript, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4351468.htm>.

⁴⁰⁷ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 88.

Jill Jolliffe to participate in the Delegation, asserting that she was a 'Fretilin crusader' who would compromise the 'objectivity' of the Delegation. Portugal subsequently terminated the visit, citing a violation of press freedom.⁴⁰⁸ This frustrated the Resistance, who had prepared a pro-independence demonstration.⁴⁰⁹ That evening, a fight broke out between pro-Indonesian provocateurs and pro-independence youth outside the Motael church in Dili, which resulted in the fatal shooting of youth activist Sebastiao Gomes Rangel.⁴¹⁰

On the morning of 12 November 1991, Indonesian troops fired into a crowd of more than 1,000 Timorese attending a memorial service and pro-independence demonstration at Santa Cruz Cemetery.⁴¹¹ The crowd had gathered after a procession from the Motael Church, which commemorated Sebastiao Gomes Rangel.⁴¹² Members of the Resistance involved in the procession displayed pro-independence banners and flags to attract the attention of the international media in Dili, who were reporting on the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Professor Peter Kooijmans.⁴¹³

Indonesia refused independent observer's access to Timor for at least 12 days after the massacre.⁴¹⁵ ABRI denied responsibility, claiming that "wild" Timorese separatists, armed with G-3 Rifles, grenades and long knives, had attacked ABRI forces.⁴¹⁶ Armed demonstrators were essential to ABRI's claim to have acted in self-defence.⁴¹⁷ Commander-in-Chief General Try Sutrisno argued that sympathetic warning shots had failed to restore order, before concluding, "They had to be blasted. Delinquents like these agitators must be shot and they will be, whenever necessary."⁴¹⁸ Indonesian medical files listed 19 casualties and 91 wounded; figures that deliberately corresponded to the year of the massacre.⁴¹⁹

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid; Fernandes, "A transformational analysis," 104.

⁴⁰⁹ Part 7.2. "Unlawful Killings and Enforced Disappearances," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1006.

⁴¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "East Timor: The November 12 Massacre and its aftermath," *Asia Watch* 3, no. 26 (1991): 3, <https://www.hrw.org/report/1991/12/12/east-timor-november-12-massacre-and-its-aftermath>

⁴¹¹ Human Rights Watch, "Timor," 3.

⁴¹² Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 89.

⁴¹³ Part 7.2. "Unlawful Killings and Enforced Disappearances," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1006.

⁴¹⁵ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Parliament of Australia, *A Review of Australia's Efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights* (1992), 72.

⁴¹⁶ Greg Austin, "Massacre on our doorstep," *SMH*, November 14, 1991; Tom Ormonde, "Killings Were Not Ordered – Alatas," *Age*, November 15, 1991.

⁴¹⁷ "Press Statement of the Embassy of Indonesia in Canberra," *Age*, November 14, 1991.

⁴¹⁸ Austin, "Massacre on our doorstep;" Mark Baker, "Timor Dissidents Have to be Shot – Indon Army Chief," *Age*, November 20, 1991.

⁴¹⁹ Part 7.2. "Unlawful Killings and Enforced Disappearances," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1010; Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 97.

Australia supported Indonesian efforts to conceal ABRI's involvement in Santa Cruz. Australia's Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, apportioned responsibility to an "undisciplined subgroup" within the Indonesian military.⁴²⁰ Evans framed the massacre as a temporary aberration - "a tragic overreaction."⁴²¹ Initial Australian media reports were limited, suggesting that Indonesian troops opened fire on the crowd at Santa Cruz and killed up to 100 people.⁴²²

Evidence of Santa Cruz challenged official accounts and caused a turning point in international attention on Timor. International media played the video footage recorded by British Journalist Max Stahl, and published eyewitness accounts from American Journalists Allan Nairn and Amy Goodman, and Australian Bob Muntz, CAA's Project Officer for the Philippines and Indonesia. The visibility of Santa Cruz sparked a major international reaction against Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. Gunn and Lee argue:

"Undoubtedly the killings in Dili transformed East Timor from a non-issue to a major international human rights issue overnight...It was the presence of foreign witnesses along with the images they were able to bring back that set off the Santa Cruz massacre from the pattern of hidden massacres perpetrated by the Indonesians in their 17 year of iron rule in East Timor. "⁴²³

Almost ten years after Santa Cruz, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas repeated that the Santa Cruz caused a 'turning point' in Indonesian diplomacy over Timor.⁴²⁴

Santa Cruz provoked a significant public outcry in Australia. Journalists published eyewitness reports that Santa Cruz was a pre-meditated and coordinated massacre. At a press conference on 15 November, Muntz testified that the massacre was unprovoked:

"I am absolutely convinced that there were no sign of any provocative behaviour...I saw no sign of anything resembling weapons amongst the rallyists."⁴²⁶

⁴²⁰ Bernard Lagan, "Jakarta general rebuked by Evans," *SMH*, December 12, 1991.

⁴²¹ Editorial, "Indonesia stretches the world's patience," *Canberra Times*, November 14, 1991.

⁴²² See Mark Metherell, "Jakarta admits Timor unrest. Indons accused of Dili killings," *Age*, November 13, 1991; "Indonesians 'massacre 100' in East Timor" and "Massacre in East Timor. Attack by Indonesia: Report," *Canberra Times*, November 13, 1991; "Troops kill 100 in Timor crowd," *SMH*, November 13, 1991.

⁴²³ Gunn and Lee, *A Critical View*, 170.

⁴²⁴ Ali Alatas, "Santa Cruz caused a turning point in our diplomacy," *Tempo*, 18-24 September 2000.

⁴²⁶ Mark Skulley, "Attack on mourners unprovoked, says witness," *SMH*, November 16, 1991.

Muntz argued that the massacre was a deliberate act of state policy:

“It was not a case of isolated volleys of fire, it was not a case of single shot weapons – it was a case of sustained automatic weapon fire.... with no possibility of cover.”⁴²⁸

In an interview at a Guam hospital on 14 November, Nairn confirmed that ABRI troops “simply walked up” to the crowd, “in a very orderly fashion,” and “gunned them down.”⁴³⁰ ABRI forces badly beat Nairn and his associate Goodman during the massacre.⁴³¹

Australian journalists reflected on the history of “murder, genocide and the abuse of human rights” in Timor.⁴³² Journalists frequently referred to the Balibo Five; executions in Dili on 7-8 December 1975; the Kraras Massacre in March 1983; and the estimated 200,000 Timorese who had died from causes related to Indonesia’s occupation.⁴³³ After Santa Cruz, journalists concluded that Indonesia had failed to “win the minds and hearts” of the Timorese, and public support for self-determination in Timor strengthened.⁴³⁴

Santa Cruz sparked Trade Union action in Australia. On 5 December, the Brisbane WWF stopped work for 12 hours on the Indonesian ship, *ANRO Jakarta*, and waterfront workers indefinitely banned Indonesian ships docking in the Port of Melbourne.⁴³⁵ The West Australian Trades and Labor Council voted to boycott Garuda flights and Indonesian ships from 7 December, the anniversary of Indonesia’s invasion of Timor.⁴³⁶ The ACT Trades and Labor Council co-ordinated a “Timorese Embassy” outside the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, which included

⁴²⁸ “Timorese leader hits at army,” *SMH*, November 16, 1991.

⁴³⁰ Stephen Hutcheon, “They simply walked up and gunned them down,” *SMH*, November 14, 1991.

⁴³¹ Kevin Childs, “It’s terror, complete terror,” *Age*, November 14, 1991; Editorial, “Indonesia stretches.”

⁴³² Mark Metherell, “Growing Use of Torture in E Timor, Says Amnesty,” *Age*, November 16, 1991.

⁴³³ Mark Baker, “A Blind Policy’s dead end in Dili,” *Age*, November 15, 1991; Editorial, “Indonesia stretches,” Hutcheon, “They simply walked;” David Jenkins, “A dismal day for Indonesia,” *SMH*, November 14, 1991; Jill Jolliffe, “Lisbon tells UN to halt ‘atrocities,’” *SMH*, November 14, 1991.

⁴³⁴ Robert Domm, “Indonesia has perpetrated a massacre like Sharpeville,” *Age*, November 14, 1991; Editorial, “Human rights fall into a Timor Gap,” *Age*, November 14, 1991; Editorial, “Timor could use a peace plan too,” *SMH*, November 14, 1991; David Jenkins, “Dismal day will return to haunt Indonesia,” *SMH*, November 14, 1991.

⁴³⁵ Mark David, “WWF Protest on Dili Killings,” *Australian Financial Review*, December 5, 1999; “Melbourne Dockers Bar Indonesian Ships,” *Asian Wall St Journal*, November 25, 1991

⁴³⁶ Shaun Menegola and Steve Manchec, “West Australian unions vote for Indonesia airline ban,” *West Australian*, December 4, 1991.

an information centre and 100 white crosses that represented the victims of Santa Cruz.⁴³⁷ Garuda Indonesia retaliated, suspending services to Brisbane, Darwin and Perth.⁴³⁸

Activists pressured the Government to support a UN sponsored inquiry into Santa Cruz, terminate co-operative programs with Indonesia and seek an act of self-determination in Timor. Interest groups demonstrated outside of the Parliament and the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra; and rallied outside of the Garuda Airlines offices in Adelaide and Brisbane.⁴³⁹ The Timorese community, unionists and other supporters held a three-week vigil outside the Indonesian consulate in Darwin. Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, Sabam Siagian, threatened to shut down Indonesian consulates in Australia if the vigil continued, provoking NT Chief Minister, Marshall Perron, to remove the demonstrators swiftly.⁴⁴⁰⁴⁴¹ Indonesian youths staged pro-Government and anti-Australia demonstrations outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in response to Australian public protests.⁴⁴²

Australian diplomats actively co-operated with Indonesian operatives to conceal intelligence about ABRI's involvement at Santa Cruz. In December, Australian Ambassador to Indonesia Philip Flood travelled to Dili and reported, "I saw no evidence that there was any deliberate or calculated decision or action of the Indonesian Government involved in this massacre."⁴⁴⁴ In fact, Lieutenant-Colonel Prabowo Subianto had informed Flood that ABRI forces had killed wounded demonstrators, in a second massacre at the military hospital in Dili.⁴⁴⁵ Ramos-Horta criticised Flood's complicity to the second massacre in Dili, arguing, "I have no doubt that [later in] November more people were killed... But cameras were not there then and hence those massacres became non-events."⁴⁴⁶ As late as 2013, Flood maintained that ABRI forces were not responsible for Santa Cruz, in his memoir *Dancing with Warriors: A Diplomatic Memoir*.⁴⁴⁷

⁴³⁷ Crag Cormick, "East Timor embassy opened," *The Green Left Weekly*, December 4, 1991, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/east-timor-embassy-opened>

⁴³⁸ "Garuda Halts Flights to 3 Australian Cities," *Reuters News*, December 9, 1991.

⁴³⁹ Philippa Stanford, "Angry Protests in Australia over Timor Massacre," *The Green Left Weekly*, November 20, 1991, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/angry-protests-over-timor-massacre>

⁴⁴⁰ Chips Mackinolty, "East Timor Protest Broken Up," *SMH*, November 29, 1991.

⁴⁴¹ Ron Scherer, "Australian Parliament Urges Harder Line on Indonesia," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 27, 1991.

⁴⁴² "Wire service Digest, Nov 21," *East Timor Documents* 3 (November 1991): 17, <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas03%2091-11-25.pdf>

⁴⁴⁴ Philip Flood, *Dancing with Warriors: A Diplomatic Memoir* (North Melbourne: Arcadia, 2011), 192.

⁴⁴⁵ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 98; John Pilger, "A Moral Outrage," *The Guardian*, November 2, 1999.

⁴⁴⁶ José Ramos-Horta, "Timor's Search for Peace," *Age*, January 2, 1992.

⁴⁴⁷ Flood, *Dancing with Warriors*, 192.

The Government exerted no significant diplomatic pressure on Indonesia after Santa Cruz. Evans rejected the public demand for Australia to suspend the *Timor Gap Treaty*, arguing,

“So long as we continue to make that judgement....that it was not an act of state but the product of aberrant behaviour by a subgroup within the country – it would be utterly inappropriate for us to take any steps which would bring the bilateral relationship into disrepair. It would certainly be quite inappropriate for us to even contemplate taking such a step so grave as to in effect, tear up a solemn international treaty. That is not a step the Government is prepared to take.”⁴⁴⁸

The *Timor Gap Treaty* entered into effect in February 1991. Interest groups such as CIET criticised that Australia had sacrificed its international reputation on human rights for its commercial interests in the Timor Sea and had been an accomplice to the ‘genocide’ in Timor.⁴⁴⁹

The Government deflected international criticism of Indonesia. In December 1991, Indonesia’s National Commission of Inquiry (NCI) concluded that demonstrators at Santa Cruz had provoked ABRI forces, who fired “spontaneously” in self-defence. The Report revised the official death toll from 19 to “around 50.”⁴⁵⁰ The Government rejected international criticism that the NCI failed to meet recognised standards of impartiality and credibility.⁴⁵¹ Evans described outcome of the inquiry as “positive and helpful” and secured special sanctions to remove 124 wooden crosses outside the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra.⁴⁵²⁴⁵³

3.5 The Keating Government’s foreign policy after Santa Cruz

⁴⁴⁸ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 11 December 1991, 4619 (Gareth Evans).

⁴⁴⁹ CIET, *Australian Government sacrifices lives for trade* (n.p.: CIET, 1991).

⁴⁵⁰ “Advance Report of the National Commission of Inquiry into 12 November 1991 Incident in Dili, 26 December 1991,” in Krieger, *East Timor Basic Documents*, 256-259.

⁴⁵¹ See “Asia Watch Criticises Commission Report on East Timor,” *East Timor Documents* 8 (January 1992): 14-16, <https://etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas08%2092-01-22.pdf>; International Commission of Jurists, *Blaming the Victims: The 12 November 1991 Massacre in Dili, East Timor and the Response of the Indonesian Government* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Commission of Jurists, February 1992), <http://icj.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/1992/02/East-Timor-blaming-the-victims-fact-finding-mission-report-1992-eng.pdf>; Norm Dixon, “Whitewash of Dili massacre,” *The Green Left Weekly*, January 22, 1991, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/w>

⁴⁵² Dixon, “Whitewash of Dili massacre.”

⁴⁵³ “Removal of East Timorese Crosses ‘Disgraceful’ (CIET)” *East Timor Documents* 9 (January – February 1992): 8, <https://etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas09%2092-02-07.pdf>

The ALP, led by Paul Keating, came to Government on 20 December 1991. Prime Minister Keating was determined to ensure that Timor did not continue to complicate Australia-Indonesia relations. Keating's former speechwriter Don Watson wrote,

“[Paul Keating] was convinced, quite independently of his foreign policy advice, that the policy approach so often quoted was inescapable: Australia could not allow the relationship with Jakarta to be determined by a single issue, even as one as painful as Timor.”⁴⁵⁵

Keating visited Indonesia between 21 and 24 April 1992, his first overseas first as Prime Minister and the first visit of an Australian Prime Minister to Indonesia since 1983. Keating affirmed the primary importance of a co-operative relationship with Indonesia, stating:

“I deliberately chose Indonesia for my first overseas visit to demonstrate that it is at the forefront of our priorities...

...On East Timor, I repeated our Governments' concern about the 12 November killings, but said we thought the Indonesian Government's response had been credible.”⁴⁵⁷

Keating isolated Timor from bilateral relations during his visit to Indonesia. Bilateral meetings did not discuss Timor.⁴⁵⁸ At a Press Conference in Jakarta on 24 April, Keating dismissed the “tragic events” and asserted that Australia would not allow Timor to ‘hijack’ relations with Indonesia. Keating argued:

“Australia regards President Soeharto's New Order Government as one of the most significant and beneficial events in its strategic history... That's why I am here. I am not here because of... Timor.”⁴⁶⁰

In April 1992, the Keating and Soeharto Governments established the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Council (AIMC) for regular consultation on bilateral trade and investment. The AIMC

⁴⁵⁵ Don Watson, *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart: A Portrait of Paul Keating PM* (Milton Point, N.S.W: Random House Pty Ltd, 2002), 167.

⁴⁵⁷ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 28 April 1992, 1829 (Paul Keating).

⁴⁵⁸ Cotton, *East Timor*, 44.

⁴⁶⁰ Peter Hartcher, “Jakarta leaves Keating at the Altar,” *SMH*, April 24, 1992.

mirrored the arrangement between Australia and Japan, awarding Indonesia – Australia's 9th largest trading partner - equal status with Japan, Australia's largest trading partner.⁴⁶¹

In 1992, the Government established a long-term policy to support a process of reconciliation between ABRI and Timorese, accompanied by improved economic and social development in Timor. Two assumptions were implicit to the Government's policy. First, disputes amongst warring Timorese factions, and ABRI's 'insensitive' approach, had caused violent incidents in Timor.⁴⁶² Second, economic and social underdevelopment had contributed to widespread dissatisfaction with Indonesian Administration.⁴⁶³ DPM&C prepared a media release, explaining Australia's position:

"Our aim as concerned outsiders is to assist where we can in measures for their [Timorese] welfare, and to support a process of reconciliation between them and the Indonesian authorities."⁴⁶⁴

The Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) began a five-year aid program to Timor, allocating \$30 million to programs including water supply, sanitation and agriculture.⁴⁶⁵

Australia's development assistance program legitimised Indonesian Administration of Timor. In 1996, Governor General Bill Hayden positively observed that Timor's economic and social development had accelerated under Indonesian Administration, and dismissed ongoing resistance to integration. Hayden wrote:

"Much of the dissidence occurring in Timor today is a product of exaggerated expectations of what the new economic order could provide and not of sympathetic responses to Fretilin's sporadic and limited insurgency activity."⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶¹ Michelle Grattan, "Closer Links with Indons," *Age*, April 21, 1992; Geoff Kitney, "Keating in Policy Shift on Indonesia," *Australian Financial Review*, April 24, 1992.

⁴⁶² Gareth Evans, "Indonesia: report of the Military Honour Council," news release, February 28, 1992, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/2945489/upload_binary/2945489.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22Timor%22

⁴⁶³ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 28 April 1992, 1829 (Paul Keating).

⁴⁶⁴ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, "Major Agreements between Australia and Indonesia signed today," news release, April 22, 1992, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-8489>.

⁴⁶⁵ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Parliament of Australia, *Australia's Relations with Indonesia* (1993), 224.

⁴⁶⁷ Bill Hayden, *Hayden, an autobiography* (Pymble, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1996), 397.

The Government dismissed the issues of self-determination, military oppression and cultural marginalisation, which were the ‘real’ causes of the intractable conflict in Timor.⁴⁶⁸

The solidarity movement pressured the Government to end Indonesia’s military occupation of Timor. Between 25 February and 28 May 1992, Senators Spindler, Coulter and Jones, respectively, submitted five petition letters from citizens that called on the Government to support or participate in consultations to resolve the conflict under UN auspices.⁴⁶⁹

Interest groups promoted regional initiatives to resolve the conflict. On 24 June 1992, seventy activists established the East Timor Talks Campaign, co-ordinated by Pat Walsh (ACFOA).⁴⁷⁰ The Campaign proposed unconditional round table talks between Indonesia, Portugal, Timorese political parties and the Catholic Church, under UN auspices.⁴⁷¹ In May 1992, with the support of the ACFOA, the CNRM presented a staged Peace Plan at the UN that included a two-year period of consultation and demilitarisation; a five-year period of transitional autonomy; and a referendum on self-determination.⁴⁷²

The Government maintained that Australia did not have a role in an international solution to the conflict in Timor. On 28 May 1992, Evans defended the Government’s decision not to support the CNRM Plan; arguing that the proposal was “inconsistent” with Australia’s recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor and that Australia was not a party principal to the conflict.⁴⁷³ Nonetheless, the CRNM Plan was an important development that demonstrated to the international community that a political solution was achievable.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁸ L.S. Mubyarto et al, *East Timor: The Impact of Integration: An Indonesian Socio-Anthropological Study* (Northcote, VIC: The Indonesia Resources and Information Program, 1991), 4-7 .

⁴⁶⁹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 25 February 1992, 50 (Sid Spindler); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 3 March 1992, 551 (Sid Spindler); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 26 March 1992, 1121 (Sid Spindler); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 24 March 1992, 927 (John Coulter); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 28 May 1992, 2838 (Gerry Jones).

⁴⁷⁰ David Scott, Herb Feith and Pat Walsh, *East Timor: Towards a Just Peace in the 1990s* (Canberra: ACFOA, 1991).

⁴⁷¹ Xanana first proposed talks with Indonesia without preconditions under UN auspices in an interview with Robert Domm in September 1990. The Timor Talks Campaign subsequently developed this proposal. See Merrill Findlay, “East Timor: it’s time to talk,” (speech on behalf of the ACFOA and the East Timor Talks Committee, the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation, New York, August 7, 1991).

⁴⁷² Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 265.

⁴⁷³ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 28 May 1992, 2909 (Gareth Evans).

⁴⁷⁴ Scott, *Last flight*, 280.

The solidarity movement submitted policy recommendations to the Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade annual report, *A Review of Australia's efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights* (December 1992).⁴⁷⁵ James Irving (AETA) urged Australia to support a staged peace process in Timor. Irving argued that Santa Cruz was a “symptom” of the larger problem, which was the illegitimacy of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor and ongoing military oppression. Irving submitted:

“The basic problem in East Timor is not that a few soldiers....go berserk and shoot at crowds of Timorese. The basic problem is that Indonesia is in military occupation of that territory and permits its military forces to abuse and oppress the people of East Timor.”

Irving argued that alternative policies to resolve the conflict, such as Australia's policy of economic and social development, would be unsuccessful because the basic right of the Timorese to self-determination remained unfulfilled. Irving asserted, “Unless Australia sees the massacre as a symptom of this larger problem, and takes measures to help end the larger problem, then it will be forced to witness continuing oppression in East Timor.” Irving advised the Government to support Timor-Indonesia talks under UN auspices.⁴⁷⁶

Australians for a Free East Timor (AFFET), established in Darwin in December 1991, encouraged the Government to mediate in Jakarta-Dili consultations, and persuade Indonesia to accept an independent Timor. Pritchett's submission to Defence Minister Barnard in October 1975 was “highly pertinent” to the AFFET's proposal. AFFET suggested that the conflict in Timor fulfilled Pritchett's prediction; citing Indonesia's strategy of forced integration and the ‘genocide’ of the Timorese; the sustained guerrilla resistance to Indonesian occupation; and Australia's ‘strained and difficult’ relations with Indonesia, and suggesting that the Government “may well wish it had followed the advice of the Department of Defence in 1975.” To resolve the conflict, AFFET proposed that the Government mediate in Jakarta-Dili consultations, with a view to establishing a co-operative agreement for an independent Timor, similar to the Jakarta-Dili security agreement outlined in Pritchett's proposal.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁵ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *A Review of Australia's Efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights*.

⁴⁷⁶ James Irving, submission no. 8 to Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *A Review of Australia's Efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights*, [n.d.], 184-191.

⁴⁷⁷ Judy Conway and Kathy Machaon, Submission No. 28. to Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *A Review of Australia's Efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights*, January 1992, 321-330.

The report of the Sub-Committee recommended that the Government support a new UN initiative to resolve the conflict in Timor. However, the Government maintained that Australia was not a party principal in Timor, and that the initiative was the responsibility of the parties directly concerned.⁴⁷⁸

3.6 Australian solidarity after Santa Cruz

In August 1992, ABRI launched a new military offensive, Operation Thoroughgoing (*Operasi Tuntas*, 1992-1997) to capture Xanana, eliminate Falintil and destroy the resistance network.⁴⁷⁹ ABRI forces arrested Xanana in November.⁴⁸⁰ In May 1993, the Indonesian court sentenced Xanana to life imprisonment on the charge of treason.⁴⁸¹ Soeharto would later reduce Xanana's sentence to 20 years, following substantial international political pressure on Jakarta to grant clemency.⁴⁸²

The solidarity movement maintained public attention on Timor after Xanana's arrest. In Adelaide, the CIET protested outside the Garuda Airlines office on the first Friday of each month, between 6 August and 3 December 1993. Demonstrators called on Indonesia to release Xanana, highlighted Indonesia's human rights violations in Timor and pressured the Government to support self-determination.⁴⁸⁴ On 7 December 1993, AFFET demonstrated at the Indonesian Consulate in Darwin, chanting anti-Indonesian slogans, and burning an Indonesian flag after the Consulate refused to accept a letter that protested Indonesia's "illegal and immoral" occupation.⁴⁸⁵ The solidarity movement maintained political pressure in Parliament. On 6 December 1994, Senator Jones presented a petition letter from 562 citizens that called on the Government to revoke Australia's recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁷⁸ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 27 May 1993, 1568 (Senator Faulkner).

⁴⁷⁹ "Military grip on East Timor tightens," *TAPOL Bulletin*, no. 113 (October 1992): 10-12; "Dili, November 12: mourning prohibited," *TAPOL Bulletin*, no. 114 (December 1992): 22; "Operasi Tuntas on the rampage," *TAPOL Bulletin*, no. 115 (February 1993): 3-5, 6-7.

⁴⁸⁰ "Xanana Gusmão captured. Many others arrested and tortured," *TAPOL Bulletin*, no. 115 (February 1993): 3.

⁴⁸¹ "CNRM: Xanana's Trial, Indonesia's Shame," *East Timor Documents* 22 (April – June 1993): 15, <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas22%2093-06-07.pdf>

⁴⁸² "Xanana sentence reduced," *East Timor Documents* 24 (August - September 1993): 8, <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas24%2093-09-30.pdf>

⁴⁸⁴ Chris Spindler, "Call to 'ground Garuda,'" *The Green Left Weekly*, August 11, 1993, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/call-ground-garuda>

⁴⁸⁵ "Darwin Protestors burn Indonesian flag," *East Timor Documents* 25 (October – December 1993): 51, <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas25%2093-12-12.pdf>

⁴⁸⁶ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 6 December 1994, 3951 (Gerry Jones).

In February 1994, Australian journalist John Pilger presented the documentary *Death of a Nation: The Timor Conspiracy*, to draw international media attention to the “truth” about Indonesia’s military occupation.⁴⁸⁷ The Documentary included eyewitness testimonies of a second massacre in Dili’s military hospital.⁴⁸⁸ Interviewees including former Consul to Dili, James Dunn, criticised Australia’s complicity in the ‘genocide’ of 200, 000 Timorese. Dunn quoted the figure from the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs inquiry into *Australia’s Relations with Indonesia* (1993), which reported, “...at least 200, 000 East Timorese have died from causes directly or indirectly attributable to integration by Indonesia.”⁴⁹⁰ The Standing Committee concluded that Timor was “the greatest difficulty” in Australia-Indonesia relations that had coloured the entire relationship.⁴⁹¹

The Government continued to dismiss Indonesia’s human rights violations in Timor. In a statement in the Parliament on 21 February, Evans maintained that the figure of 200, 000 deaths had no credibility and denied that a second massacre had occurred in Dili, arguing, “We found then and we still find any evidence for a second series of killings to be quite sketchy and circumstantial.”⁴⁹³ Similarly, Keating asserted that the opportunity for self-determination in Timor had passed, arguing, “I think to be arguing now against the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia would be absolutely fruitless.”⁴⁹⁴

3.7 Australian foreign policy and public opinion after Santa Cruz

Wider and deeper defence co-operation defined Australia-Indonesia relations after Santa Cruz. In October 1992, the US Congress suspended the International Military, Education and Training (IMET) Program of military assistance to Indonesia, to protest renewed military campaigns in Timor. Australia met Indonesian demands for military training. In 1994, 300 Indonesian military officers participated in Australian defence activities including exercises, intelligence exchanges, and training at military colleges; a dramatic acceleration from the five Indonesian officers who

⁴⁸⁷ “‘Smear Campaign’ Cannot Hide Evans shameful role on Timor,” *East Timor Documents* 27 (February – April 1994): 53, <http://etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas27%2094-04-07.pdf>

⁴⁸⁸ “Wounded victims of Timor carnage murdered in military hospital. A second massacre in Dili,” *East Timor Documents* 26, (December – February 1994): 67, <http://etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas26%2094-02-15.pdf>

⁴⁹⁰ Margot Date and David Langsam, “Genocide on our doorstep,” *SMH*, March 10, 1994.

⁴⁹¹ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia’s Relations with Indonesia* (1993), 95.

⁴⁹³ “Australia unconvinced of new Timor massacre claims,” *East Timor Documents* 27 (February – April 1994): 53, <http://etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas27%2094-04-07.pdf>

⁴⁹⁴ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 30 September 1993, 1600 (Paul Keating).

participated in training activities in Australia in the 1990-91 period.⁴⁹⁵ Keating boasted that Australia had become Indonesia's most important partner for defence arrangements after Santa Cruz.⁴⁹⁶

The US continued to restrict weapons transfers and arms sales to Indonesia, in protest to continuing human rights violations in Timor.⁴⁹⁷ Australia continued to fill the void, agreeing to a joint venture project to produce weapons in August 1994.⁴⁹⁸ Keating described the priority that Australia attached to a stable and productive relationship with Indonesia, asserting,

“No country is more important to Australia than Indonesia. If we fail to get this relationship right, and nurture and develop it, the whole web of our foreign relations is incomplete.”⁵⁰⁰

Due to Indonesia's importance to Australia, the Government strengthened, rather than suspended, bilateral co-operation after Santa Cruz.

The Government rejected consistent domestic pressure to suspend defence co-operation with Indonesia. Australian public opposition stemmed from the concern that Indonesian military units associated with Australia would commit violations of human rights in Timor. On 1 June 1992, Senator Jones submitted a petition letter from 266 Australian citizens, demanding the Government suspend military assistance to Indonesia.⁵⁰¹ On 10 December 1992, Senator Charmarette asked Defence Minister Ray to suspend Australian defence assistance to Indonesia based on human rights concerns.⁵⁰² Ray disregarded Charmarette's proposal and reaffirmed the primary importance of Indonesia to Australia, stating,

“Australia will not follow the American example and cancel defence co-operation. A close defence relationship between Australia and Indonesia is in Australia's strategic interests...”⁵⁰⁴

⁴⁹⁵ Catley and Dugis, *Australian Indonesian relations*, 25-27.

⁴⁹⁶ Paul Keating, “Speech by the Prime Minister, the Hon P J Keating MP,” (speech, Australia Today Indonesia '94, Overseas Passenger Terminal, Sydney, March 16, 1994).

⁴⁹⁷ Kurt Biddle, “Indonesia-US military ties,” *Inside Indonesia* 70 (April–Jun 2002): <http://www.insideindonesia.org/indonesia-us-military-ties-2>

⁴⁹⁸ “Australia seeks weapons joint venture with RI,” *Jakarta Post*, August 8, 1994.

⁵⁰⁰ Paul Keating, “Speech by the Prime Minister, the Hon P J Keating MP.”

⁵⁰¹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 1 June 1992, 3099 (Gerry Jones).

⁵⁰² Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 10 December 1992, 4788 (Christabel Charmarette).

⁵⁰⁴ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 10 December 1992, 4788 (Robert Ray).

The Government denied that there was a relationship between Australian military training and Indonesian military oppression inside Timor. In September 1993, Evans confirmed that Australian defence assistance did not support Indonesia's military occupation of Timor, commenting, "It is not directed to the Indonesian armed forces internal function, whether in East Timor or elsewhere in Indonesia."⁵⁰⁶ However, in 1995, the Parliamentary Research Service reported that internal security remained the prime function of the Indonesian military, and warned that there was serious potential for Indonesian military units associated with Australia to commit human rights violations in Timor.⁵⁰⁷ The Government did not act on the advice of the Parliamentary Research Service.

The *Australia-Indonesia Agreement on Maintaining Security* (AMS; 1995) formalised bilateral defence co-operation. AMS agreed to ministerial consultations on common security interests and "adverse challenges" to either party, and to pursue "mutually beneficial co-operative activities."⁵⁰⁹ General Peter Gration, Keating's advisor Allan Gyngell, Indonesia Ambassador Allan Taylor and the Indonesian Minister of State Moerdani, secretly negotiated the AMS between June 1994 and November 1995.⁵¹⁰ The secret negotiations reflected the Government's concern that domestic opinion would undermine the prospects for a successful treaty. As Keating argued, "if there'd been a more public process, there probably wouldn't have been a treaty."⁵¹²

The Government's anxiety was justified. The strong divergence between official policy and public opinion on Timor had created significant tension in Australia-Indonesia relations in 1995. In April, Jakarta had confirmed Lieutenant General Herman Mantiri's nomination as Australian Ambassador to Indonesia. The Keating Government supported the nomination, believing that Mantiri's high rank and experience in Timor would be invaluable to the management of the sensitive issue in bilateral relations.⁵¹³ Activists strongly opposed Mantiri's nomination; emphasising that Mantiri had defended the actions of ABRI forces at Santa Cruz as "quite proper."⁵¹⁴ Public opposition provoked Foreign Minister Alatas to abort Mantiri's appointment in

⁵⁰⁶ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 27 September 1993, 1239 (Gareth Evans).

⁵⁰⁷ Gary Brown, Frank Frost and Stephen Sherlock, 'The Australian-Indonesian Security Agreement: Issues and Implications,' (Research Paper No 25, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, 1995 – 1996), http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/RP9596/96rp25

⁵⁰⁹ Gary Brown, Frank Frost and Stephen Sherlock, *The Australian-Indonesian Security Agreement: Issues and Implications*.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹² "Leaders sign historic Indonesian treaty," *Australian*, December 19, 1995.

⁵¹³ Catley and Dugis, *Australian Indonesian relations*, 226.

⁵¹⁴ CIET, *The Ugly Face of Indonesian Genocide* (Adelaide: CIET, 1995).

July; angered that critical public opinion was illegitimate, inappropriate and cost Indonesia the use of 'expensive' Generals.⁵¹⁵

New interest groups that emerged after Santa Cruz were critical to the sustained public attention on Timor in 1995.⁵¹⁷ In January 1992, Robert Domm and Mark Aarons had established the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA) in Sydney, to draw public attention to Indonesia's human rights violations in Timor.⁵¹⁸ In February 1995, ETRA led a six-month awareness raising campaign that culminated with the first national conference, *It's Time to Lead the Way: Timorese people speak about exile, resistance and identity*, held in Melbourne.⁵¹⁹ The activities of interest groups including ETRA were essential to transforming public understanding about Timor and mobilising public opinion. In September, the *Age* published the results of an opinion poll that demonstrated that 68% of voters believed that the Government should take stronger action to resolve the conflict in Timor, with 35% believing that the Government should take stronger action even to the detriment of Australia's relationship with Indonesia.⁵²⁰

The conflict between Government policy and public opinion continued. In November, 1, 360 Timorese sought asylum in Australia. The Government argued that the Timorese were 'Portuguese citizens' and attempted to deport the asylum seekers to Portugal.⁵²¹ The Sisters of the Josephite Foundation established a Sanctuary Movement, to support the Timorese right to asylum in Australia. The Sanctuary Movement grew into a nation-wide, citizen-based network comprised of more than 8,000 individuals, religious groups and organisations. Protestors pledged to provide sanctuary and 'hide' the Timorese, should the Government attempt to enforce their deportation to Portugal.⁵²² The Sanctuary Network presented a significant political challenge to the Government's official policy. It was not until 2005 that the Howard Government assessed the asylum applications individually and allowed almost all of the Timorese to remain in Australia.⁵²³

⁵¹⁵ Catley and Dugis, *Australian Indonesian relations*, 226-227; Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 148.

⁵¹⁷ Scott, *Last Flight*, 273.

⁵¹⁸ "East Timor Relief Association, 13 May 1993," *East Timor Documents* 22 (April- June 1993): 132, <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/timordocs/timmas22%2093-06-07.pdf>

⁵¹⁹ ETRA, *It's Time to lead the way: Timorese people speak about exile, resistance and identity* (Collingwood, VIC: ETRA, 1996).

⁵²⁰ Tim Colebatch, "Public Backing for Tough Line on Timor Puts PM on the stop," *Age*, September 15, 1995.

⁵²¹ Scott, *Last Flight*, 287

⁵²² Smythe, *The Heaviest Blow*, 116 – 117.

⁵²³ Scott, *Last Flight*, 287

In the context of sustained domestic contention, the announcement of the AMS sparked a major protest. Between 17 October and 30 November 1995, Senator Bourne presented 10 petition letters to the Senate, representing 1, 088 citizens who called on the Government to end Australia's defence co-operation with Indonesia and support self-determination in Timor.⁵²⁴ Former Australian Ambassador Malcolm Booker criticised the AMS, arguing that Australia's "support of the Indonesian military amounts to helping the regime contribute to denying its own citizens rights."⁵²⁶

The Government justified Australia's defence co-operation with Indonesia on the grounds that engagement would professionalise Indonesia's armed forces. Evans rejected domestic concern that the AMS endorsed Indonesia's internal security role and human rights violations in Timor, arguing, "The Treaty will improve Australia's capacity as an effective lobbyist on Indonesian human rights."⁵²⁸ Keating continued to deny that Australia's defence co-operation with Indonesia furthered ABRI's military oppression inside Timor. As late as 2000 – and despite Indonesian military and militia violence that followed the August 1999 referendum – Keating wrote that Santa Cruz was the result of "an appalling lapse of control by individual security forces," not a deliberate Indonesian military strategy in Timor.⁵²⁹

Between 1983 and 1996, Australian Governments strengthened political, military and economic relations with Indonesia, based on Australia's recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. The solidarity movement continued to expose Indonesian military force in Timor, which maintained public opposition to official policy. Australia's bipartisan foreign policy was essential for governments to manage public opinion and prevent further decline in Australia-Indonesia relations. Despite official efforts, public support for self-determination in Timor accelerated after Santa Cruz, and this would have enduring consequences for the Howard Government.

⁵²⁴ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 17 October 1995, 1913; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, October 19, 1995, 2101; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 23 October 1995, 2257; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 24 October 1995, 2356; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 26 October 1995, 2563; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 16 November 1995, 3129; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 21 November, 1995, 3408; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 27 November 1995, 3940; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 29 November 1995, 4122; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 30 November 1995, 4354 (Vicki Bourne).

⁵²⁶ Malcolm Booker, "A Waste of Time – and Hits Democracy," *Canberra Times*, December 19, 1995.

⁵²⁸ Karen Middleton, "Indonesian Kill Reports Raise Concern," *Age*, December 21, 1995.

⁵²⁹ Paul Keating, *Engagement: Australia faces the Pacific* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2000), 129.

Chapter 4: Australian foreign policy, 1996 – 1999

The LNP, led by John Howard, came to Government on 2 March 1996. The Howard Government upheld Australia's recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor, and dismissed public opposition. In January 1998, the ALP ended the bipartisan consensus and created a new, political space for the solidarity movement to contest the official policy effectively. Domestic pressure consistently forced the Government to defend Australian foreign policy.

Soeharto's New Order Regime experienced similar domestic pressure. In mid-1998, an economic crisis in Indonesia forced Soeharto's resignation. Under strong domestic and international pressure, Soeharto's successor B.J. Habibie, offered Timor special autonomy status in exchange for international recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. In January 1999, Timor's strengthening independence campaign, an ongoing economic crisis and sustained international scrutiny, forced Jakarta to allow a referendum on Timor's political status.

From mid-1998, the Indonesian military developed a militia terror campaign to prevent an independent Timor. Australia acted as Jakarta's foreign ally, by containing pressure for international intervention. The solidarity movement exposed Indonesia's military strategy in Timor, complicating the Government's efforts to contain international pressure. After April 1999, a rapid leak of Australian intelligence documents and diplomatic cables revealed the Government's knowledge of Indonesian military strategy, which reinforced domestic opposition to official policy.

Timor voted for independence from Indonesia on 30 August. The Indonesian military rapidly implemented a contingency plan of massive violence to reverse the result of the ballot, and prevent an independent Timor. Australian observers in Timor exposed Indonesia's military force, sparking nation-wide protests in Australia, and forcing a panicked Government to act rapidly to allow international intervention in Timor and prevent a political crisis in Australia. Public action changed official policy in a short time, because it built upon 24 years of activism that had sustained public attention on Timor, and threatened to escalate. Australian Governments could never conceal Indonesian military force in Timor and Australian intervention in Timor fractured relations with Indonesia, fulfilling Pritchett's prediction.

The historical detail that accompanies this political argument is best found in Clinton Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the Independence of East Timor* (2004), and will be available in the Australian War Memorial's forthcoming Official History of Australian Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor.

4.1 The Howard Government's first term, 1996 – 1998

The Howard Government extended significant diplomatic support to Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. In October 1996, the Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Belo and José Ramos-Horta, and acknowledged that self-determination was essential to resolve the conflict in Timor.⁵³⁰ Australia and Indonesia opposed the Nobel Committee's decision and boycotted the award ceremony in Oslo.⁵³¹ Howard personally refused to be "drawn into the politics of the East Timorese dispute," and denied Ramos-Horta a meeting in Canberra after his return to Australia.⁵³² The Government was determined not to allow Timor to "damage or affect or to upset" Australia's relations with Indonesia.⁵³³

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Timor's independence leaders caused Australian public support for self-determination to strengthen. After returning to Australia, Ramos-Horta delivered speeches to large audiences gathered in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.⁵³⁴ Senators referred to Australia's moral obligation to repay Timorese assistance during WWII, and called on the Government to support self-determination.⁵³⁵ The Senate's vote forced the leader of the Government in the Senate, Robert Hill, to place the official policy firmly on the record:

"Successive Australian Governments have recognised Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor since 1979. There has been no change to the Government's policy on East Timor including the East Timorese right of self-determination."⁵³⁶

Australia's bipartisan foreign policy enabled the Government to continue to ignore domestic opinion. In November 1996, Howard argued firmly:

"You will be aware of the great importance of the bilateral relationship between Australia and Indonesia...My government and governments before mine of both political

⁵³⁰ Nobel Media, "News release – Nobel Peace Prize 1996," news release, October 11, 1996 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1996/press.html.

⁵³¹ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 29

⁵³² Ibid, 28 – 29.

⁵³³ Ken Westmoreland, *A pretty unfair place: East Timor ten years after self-determination* (London: Lafaek Press, 2009), 60.

⁵³⁴ Ibid, 30.

⁵³⁵ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 14 October 1996, 4090 (Vicki Bourne); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 16 October 1996, 5619 (Anthony Albanese); Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 16 October 1996, 4210.

⁵³⁶ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 16 October 1996, 4248 (Robert Hill).

persuasions have shown a determination not to allow that issue [Timor] to contaminate or undermine the broader relationship.”⁵³⁷

As late as 2010, Howard emphasised the importance of the bipartisan consensus that dictated, “Nothing was to get in the way of smooth relations between Australia and Indonesia.”⁵³⁸

ALP Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Laurie Brereton, fractured Australia’s bipartisan foreign policy. In August 1997, Brereton advised the ALP to support self-determination in Timor:

“No lasting solution to the conflict in East Timor is likely in the absence of negotiation through which the people of East Timor can exercise their right of self-determination.”⁵³⁹

Brereton believed that Australia would confront a post-Soeharto leadership in Indonesia in the near future. Brereton argued that a platform on self-determination was essential to resolve the conflict in Timor, remove the ‘running sore’ in bilateral relations, and enable the next Australian Government to establish friendly relations with the next group of Indonesian leaders.⁵⁴⁰ In January 1998, the ALP adopted self-determination in Timor as the party platform, ending the bipartisan consensus.⁵⁴¹

The ALP policy shift created a space for effective political pressure, and increasingly forced the Government to defend Australian support for Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. In November 1998, Brereton initiated a comprehensive inquiry into past Australian policy toward Timor, and the prospects for a lasting solution to the conflict.⁵⁴² The inquiry mobilised public opinion, receiving 101 submissions that considered Australia’s past and future policy toward Timor.⁵⁴³ In February 1999, Brereton delivered a speech that included previously unreleased content of

⁵³⁷ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Press Conference of the President and Prime Minister Howard of Australia, Parliament House, Canberra, Australia,” news release, November 20, 1996, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00010173.pdf>.

⁵³⁸ John Howard, *Lazarus Rising: A personal and political biography* (Pymble, NSW: HarperCollins, 2010), 337.

⁵³⁹ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 174-175.

⁵⁴⁰ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 164-172, 187-88.

⁵⁴¹ Shirley Scott, “Issues in Australian Foreign Policy: January to June 1998,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 44, no. 4 (1998): 564. doi: 10.1111/1467-8497.00036.

⁵⁴² Laurie Brereton, “Parliamentary Inquiries on the Balibo deaths and East Timor policy,” news release, November 5, 1998, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/2014HNC03117945/upload_binary/2014HNC03117945.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22Senate%20Inquiry%20East%20Timor%22

⁵⁴³ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 1.

Whitlam's talks with Soeharto in September 1974, and inflamed political debate about Whitlam's encouragement of Indonesia's annexation of Timor.⁵⁴⁴ Brereton argued:

"I think it is a matter of enduring regret that Whitlam did not speak more forcefully and clearly in support of an internationally supervised act of self-determination as the only real means of achieving a lasting and acceptable resolution of East Timor's status. At best Whitlam's approach was dangerously ambiguous, and by mid-1975 increasingly unsustainable."

Brereton called on "both sides of politics" to accept responsibility for Australia's "profound foreign policy failure" on Timor, and repeated the demand for an Australian policy in support of self-determination.⁵⁴⁵ Downer attempted to curtail the political debate, by authorising the early release of the official diplomatic record, published in the volume *Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976* (2000).⁵⁴⁶

Soeharto's New Order regime experienced similar domestic pressure throughout this period. In August 1997, the Asian Financial Crisis caused severe economic decline in Indonesia.⁵⁴⁷ Nationwide riots and protests that demanded democratic change, and official support for political reform, forced Soeharto to resign in May 1998.⁵⁴⁸

President Habibie came under immediate pressure to resolve the domestic crisis, and commit to liberal economic and democratic reform in Indonesia.⁵⁴⁹ On 9 June, Habibie announced that Indonesia would grant Timor 'special autonomy status' in exchange for international recognition

⁵⁴⁴ Geoffrey Barker, "Labor Party row: sparks fly over former Timor policy," *Australian Financial Review*, February 5, 1999; Paul Daley, "Whitlam's Timor tragic," *Age*, February 5, 1999; Paul Clearly, "Labor's unlikely conscience," *SMH*, February 20, 1999.

⁵⁴⁵ Laurie Brereton, "Australia and East Timor," (speech, the Queensland Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, February 4, 1999).

⁵⁴⁶ Bruce Haigh, "Why we never get Indonesia policy right," *Age*, February 3, 1999; Maryanne Kelton and Richard Leaver, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy: January to June 1999," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 45, no. 4 (1999): 530, doi: 10.1111/1467-8497.00079.

⁵⁴⁷ Dr Stephen Sherlock, 'Crisis in Indonesia: Economy, Society and Politics' (Current Issues Brief No. 13, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, 1998), http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/CIB9798/98cib13.

⁵⁴⁸ Part 3. "The History of the Conflict," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 275-276.

⁵⁴⁹ Grayson J. Lloyd, "The diplomacy on East Timor: Indonesia, the United Nations and the International Community," in *Out of the Ashes: Destruction and Reconstruction of East Timor* eds. James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2003), 79, <http://press.anu.edu.au?p=68261>.

of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. Subsequently, 'special status' became an item on the agenda of the Tripartite Talks.⁵⁵⁰

The majority of Timorese rejected autonomy as a permanent solution to the conflict, and held public meetings and peaceful demonstrations to assert their right to self-determination.⁵⁵¹ Indonesian security forces and pro-integration groups violently retaliated against independence supporters.⁵⁵²

Jakarta attempted to deflect international scrutiny of its Timor policy. In July, Habibie announced that Indonesia would withdrawal all *Kopassus* troops from Timor, and reduce ABRI forces to fewer than 6000, who would pursue humanitarian and development projects.⁵⁵³ On 8 August, a highly publicised military withdrawal contributed to the image of reconciliation in Timor. In reality, the Indonesian military rotated, and steadily began to increase, its security forces.⁵⁵⁴ The Indonesian military would now act to prevent an independent Timor.

4.2 Jakarta's 'foreign ally'

In mid-1998, the Indonesian military developed a strategy to prevent an independent Timor, by guaranteeing the success of the autonomy proposal. The military component of the strategy was to recruit, arm, train and command proxy military forces, known collectively as the 'militia.' Milita intimidated and killed independence supporters, creating the impression of indigenous opposition to an independent Timor. The Indonesian military then claimed that it was acting in good faith to prevent a 'civil war' between Timor's 'warring factions.' The political component of the strategy was to prevent foreign military intervention in Timor. The fiction that the militia was an independent force, and that the Indonesian military was the 'neutral arbiter' between Timor's 'warring factions,' was crucial to containing pressure for international intervention.⁵⁵⁵

The Howard Government played the role of Jakarta's foreign ally, by acting to contain pressure for international intervention in Timor. The Government consistently denied that the Indonesian military was responsible for atrocities in Timor. As Fernandes has demonstrated, the Government

⁵⁵⁰ Harold Crouch, "The TNI and East Timor Policy," in Fox and Soares, *Out of the Ashes*, 146.

⁵⁵¹ Lansell Taudevin, *East Timor: Too Little Too Late* (Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove, 1999), 149.

⁵⁵² Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Parliament of Australia, *East Timor: Interim Report of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee* (1999), 36.

⁵⁵³ John Martinkus, *A Dirty Little War* (Milsons Point, NSW: Random House, 2001), 54.

⁵⁵⁴ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 36.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid, 47.

employed four evolving arguments to defend Indonesian military atrocities in Timor. Initially, the Government disputed the facts, before arguing that violence had occurred on both sides, and later, deferring responsibility to “rogue elements” within Indonesia’s security forces.⁵⁵⁶ Throughout, the Government downplayed the urgent need for international intervention, by arguing that Timor’s warring factions’ needed to ‘sort themselves out.’ Downer explained the Government’s position:

“Well, the problem in East Timor is the tension between pro-integrationists, that is the people who support remaining with Indonesia, and the other East Timorese. We’ve been encouraging as hard as we possibly can the pro-integrationists and the pro-independence people to get together and start to work through the resolution of their differences.”⁵⁵⁷

The Government provided crucial diplomatic support to Indonesia and contained pressure for international intervention in Timor.

The solidarity movement exposed Indonesian military force in Timor, which mobilised public attention and forced the Government to defend Australia’s policy. After April 1999, a rapid leak of intelligence and diplomatic documents revealed the Government’s knowledge of Indonesian military activity, and strengthened domestic opposition to the official policy. In September 1999, public support for an independent Timor forced the Government to assume responsibility for InterFET to prevent a political crisis in Australia.

4.3 Australian foreign policy and public opinion, 1998 - 1999

The Government provided maximum diplomatic support to Indonesia’s military strategy in Timor. In July, Downer praised Indonesia’s troop withdrawal as a “step in the right direction.”⁵⁵⁸ Activists in Australia, who were in regular contact with the National Council of East Timorese Resistance (CNRT) - a unified front that replaced the CNRM in April 1998 - the UDT, Catholic Church and residents of Dili, attempted to expose Indonesia’s ‘withdrawal sham.’⁵⁵⁹ Downer dismissed these reports, and confirmed that future military withdrawals would follow:

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid, 49.

⁵⁵⁷ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 65.

⁵⁵⁸ Ian Stewart, “Downer hails Timor troop withdrawal,” *Australian*, July 28, 1998.

⁵⁵⁹ East Timor International Support Centre (ETISC), “ABRI in East Timor. Will they ever leave?” news release, August 12, 1998, <http://etan.org/et/1998/august/aug8-14/12abri.htm> ; Martinkus, *A Dirty Little War*, 54; Taudevin, *East Timor*, 81; UDT, “Indonesian withdrawal Sham,” news release, July 26, 1998, <http://etan.org/et/1998/july/july22-28/26sham.htm>

“I discussed this matter with Foreign Minister Alatas. He has confirmed media reports that troop numbers would be reduced. He has confirmed a figure of about a thousand and tells me that this is to be the first in a series of withdrawals.”⁵⁶⁰

Downer contradicted Australian intelligence that Indonesia had only rotated troops in Timor, which the Government received within hours of the public troop withdrawal.⁵⁶¹

In October, Dr Andrew McNaughtan smuggled ABRI's personnel records for Timor out of the territory, and exposed Indonesia and Australia's claims as lies.⁵⁶² The documents revealed an 11.3% increase in combat troops, *Kopassus* continued presence, and an extensive network of militia that operated under ABRI's supervision.⁵⁶³ In Parliament, Brereton demanded that the Government press Indonesia to accept permanent, international observers to ensure the transparency of military activity in Timor:

“Labor has repeatedly called on the Howard Government to...urge acceptance of independent international observers in East Timor to monitor the Indonesian military presence and all other armed groups in the territory.”

According to Brereton:

“It would constitute an extraordinary failure of Australia's diplomatic and intelligence services for the Howard Government not to have been aware for a considerable time of the full dimensions of Indonesia's military and security presence in East Timor.”⁵⁶⁴

The Government acted swiftly to defend Indonesia's credibility. Downer professed an ignorance of the document's origins, and attempted to downplay their significance:

“If the documents were to be accurate....If troop numbers aren't being reduced...then it is going to weaken the spirit of reconciliation, which is necessary for there to be a

⁵⁶⁰ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 36.

⁵⁶¹ Lincoln Wright, “ADF Knew Indonesia Troops Still On East Timor: Labor,” *Canberra Times*, October 31, 1998.

⁵⁶² Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 37.

⁵⁶³ Carmel Budiardjo & Liem Soei Liong, “East Timor under the Indonesian jackboot,” *An Analysis of Indonesian Army Documents* TAPOL Occasional Report 26 (1998): <http://www.tapol.org/news-and-reports/reports/east-timor-under-indonesian-jackboot>.

⁵⁶⁴ Laurie Brereton, “Leaked Documents on Indonesia's military presence in East Timor,” news release, October 30, 1998,

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Timor%20Date%3A30%2F10%2F1998%20Dataset%3Apressrel;rec=0;resCount=Default>

settlement for the East Timor problem. So we..are attempting to verify the authenticity of the documents.”⁵⁶⁵

Downer then expressed significant confidence in Indonesia’s security forces, asserting that Indonesia had made contributions that were more positive to reconciliation in Timor over the past six months than in the previous 23 years.⁵⁶⁶ Under pressure to verify the authenticity of the leaked documents, Downer also tried to defend the Government’s credibility:

“First of all, I’m telling you that understandably, no government is going to talk about intelligence, but secondly, there have been rumours about troop numbers in East Timor which have suggested that the draw-down of troops hasn’t occurred to the extent that the Indonesians said it would occur. I guess the third thing I’m saying is that we haven’t walked away from the issue. We have been in constant contact with the Indonesian Government over a long period of time, including very recently, on this whole issue.”⁵⁶⁷

However, the published documents, and Brereton’s demand for permanent international observers in Timor, forced the Government “onto the back foot” in terms of its knowledge of Indonesian military activity in Timor.⁵⁶⁸

11 days after Downer’s statement, the Indonesian military began a militia terror campaign in Timor.⁵⁶⁹ On 13 November, ABRI and militia killed at least 50 civilians, detained and tortured others, and burnt houses and property in Alas, in retaliation to an earlier Falintil raid.⁵⁷⁰

The Government tried to defend Indonesian military atrocities at Alas. In December, Australia’s military attaché to Jakarta, Colonel Millen, travelled to Alas and claimed that a maximum of nine people had died, which included three unarmed Indonesian soldiers. Under intense domestic pressure, Downer began to refer to Millen’s visit to Alas as an ‘investigation:’

“Our military attaché has been to Alas. He has been able to investigate what the Red Cross has already investigated and he doesn’t have any evidence of a massacre of the dimensions that have been claimed.”⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁵ Paul Daley, “Fear Over Troops Switch on Timor,” *Age*, October 31, 1998.

⁵⁶⁶ Paul Daley, “Downer in Dark on Timor Troops,” *Age*, November 2, 1998.

⁵⁶⁷ Daley, “Downer in Dark.”

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 50.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; Part 3. “The History of the Conflict,” in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 1: 279.

⁵⁷¹ Robert Garran, “Downer rejects E Timor killings,” *Australian*, December 9, 1998.

The solidarity movement thwarted Downer's attempt to downplay Indonesian military atrocities and defuse international concern. In January 1999, a Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Documentary revealed new evidence of Indonesian military atrocities at Alas, after video testimony by local residents was smuggled out of Timor.⁵⁷² Australia's Naval Attaché in Jakarta, Captain David Ramsey, then claimed that Millen's 'investigation' was a routine "handover" visit to introduce his successor to ABRI personnel.⁵⁷³ The new evidence prompted sharp criticism from the acting Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Arch Bevis:

"Colonel Brian Millen's visit now appears to have been more designed to relieve international pressure on the Indonesian Government than as a serious investigation of the Alas killings."⁵⁷⁴

Brereton repeated the demand for permanent international observers in Timor.⁵⁷⁵ The new evidence of Indonesian military atrocities, and effective political pressure, forced the Government to admit that Millen had spent just two hours in Alas, and commit to 'look into' the new allegations.⁵⁷⁶

In January 1999, the strength of Timor's independence campaign, an ongoing economic crisis and the international demand for Indonesian reform, forced Jakarta to allow a referendum on Timor's political status.⁵⁷⁷ ABRI and civilian authorities recruited, supplied, armed and commanded a second wave of militia groups, which waged a 'dirty war' to engineer an autonomy vote in Timor.⁵⁷⁸

The solidarity movement exposed ABRI and militia violence inside Timor. The Melbourne-based East Timor Human Rights Centre (ETHRC) encouraged activists to fax letters to Habibie and Colonel Suratman to demand the immediate disarmament of militia. Similarly, ETHRC

⁵⁷² Bernard Lagan, "Fischer unhappy about our inquiry into Timor killings," *SMH*, January 8, 1999

⁵⁷³ Rebecca Rose, "Timor Probe Lasted Two Hours," *West Australian*, January 9, 1999.

⁵⁷⁴ Arch Bevis, "East Timor: Investigation of Alas Allegations," news release, January 8, 1999, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Alas%20Date%3A01%2F01%2F1999%20%3E%3E%2010%2F01%2F1999;rec=0;resCount=Default>

⁵⁷⁵ Laurie Brereton, "East Timor: International monitors required," news release, January 7, 1999, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/2014HNC01023290/upload_binary/2014HNC01023290.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22Alas%22

⁵⁷⁶ Lagan, "Fischer unhappy."

⁵⁷⁷ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 34-36.

⁵⁷⁸ Damien Kingsbury, "The TNI and militias" in *Guns and ballot boxes: East Timor's vote for independence*, ed. Damien Kingsbury (Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute, 2000), 70.

encouraged activists to fax Australian Parliamentarians, and demand the Government act to prevent further violence in Timor.⁵⁷⁹ Journalists began to publish reports and testimonial evidence from senior ABRI officers and militia leaders that ABRI trained and armed militia groups to subvert the referendum in Timor.⁵⁸⁰

The Government provided diplomatic cover to the Indonesian military. Downer tried to dispute that the Indonesian military had armed militia:

“If it is happening at all, it certainly isn’t official Indonesian Government policy; it certainly isn’t something that’s being condoned by General Wiranto, the head of the armed forces.”

Downer suggested that anonymous “rogue elements” within Indonesia’s security forces could be informally arming pro-integrationist groups, and denied that the Indonesian military had engaged in a proxy war in Timor:

“The Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas...told me that the Indonesian armed forces were not arming paramilitaries. Nevertheless whilst we accept that it is not the official policy of ABRI or the Indonesian government, there is a risk that some rogue elements with ABRI may be or may have been providing arms to the so-called paramilitaries in East Timor.”⁵⁸¹

Downer’s statements directly contradicted the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO) 6 January Brief, which confirmed that ABRI had armed militia in order to subvert the referendum in Timor:

“ABRI recognises that using force against pro-referendum groups will continue to attract international criticism. So using force against the referendum movement looks likely to continue to be subcontracted.”⁵⁸²

Similarly, Downer contradicted the DIO’s 4 March Brief, which noted that ABRI forces were “clearly protecting, and in some instances operating with, militants,” warned that further violence

⁵⁷⁹ ETHRC “Urgent situation in East Timor,” news release, January 27, 1999, <https://etan.org/et/1999/january/22-31/27urgent.htm>

⁵⁸⁰ James Dunn, “East Timor: A Challenge to Australia,” *SMH*, February 25, 1999.

⁵⁸¹ Goldsworthy, “East Timor,” 1237

⁵⁸² Ball, “Silent Witness,” 43-44.

was “certain” and that General Wiranto was “turning a blind eye.”⁵⁸³ Downer’s actions had the effect of providing diplomatic cover to Indonesian military atrocities.

The solidarity movement forced Downer to defend the misleading public statements, after ABC Radio disclosed the content of the DIO 4 March Brief.⁵⁸⁴ Brereton criticised the Government’s complicity to Indonesia’s militia terror campaign:

"Had the Howard Government acted properly and spoken up clearly and unambiguously about what they knew was happening, the Indonesian Government would have been obliged to respond and a great many East Timorese could still be alive today."⁵⁸⁵

Downer tried to deny that there was a contradiction between the Brief, and his earlier public statements:

“There is no discrepancy at all because we were making representations to the Indonesian Government a week before that report was written.”⁵⁸⁶

Downer tried to defend the Government’s policy position:

“If we had followed the ranting advice of Mr Brereton over the past three months there would be...no chance to raise these issues or apply pressure on the Indonesian authorities because his proposed actions would have ensured Australia had no relationship with Indonesia at all.”⁵⁸⁷

This was the Government’s second forced clarification on Australian policy.

On 6 April, ABRI and militia forces took control of Liquiça village, and attacked approximately 2, 000 Timorese who had sheltered at the Church. Indonesian troops threw tear gas into the church; forcing people to flee toward militia, who attacked using crude, handmade weapons

⁵⁸³ Ibid, 44-45.

⁵⁸⁴ Geoffrey Barker, “Timor deaths: Downer says Labor is lying,” *Australian Financial Review*, April 24, 1999.

⁵⁸⁵ Peter Cole-Adams and Michael Millett, “We failed to save lives, says Brereton,” *SMH*, April 24, 1999.

⁵⁸⁶ Tony Wright, “Downer Shrugs off Timor Accusation,” *Age*, April 24, 1999.

⁵⁸⁷ Alexander Downer, “Brereton Claims Disgusting,” news release, April 23, 1999, http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/1999/fa040_99.html

including rocks and machetes. ABRI and militia executed those that remained in the compound. As many as 60 people died in the massacre.⁵⁸⁸

Journalists in Australia published credible eyewitness accounts of the Indonesian military's involvement in the Liquiça massacre, and began reporting that militia were proxy forces, armed and commanded by ABRI.⁵⁸⁹⁵⁹⁰ Reports about Indonesia's military activity in Timor strengthened critical public opinion in Australia. ETRA organised a national protest in Canberra, and demanded that Jakarta disarm militia.⁵⁹¹ Interest groups promoted UN sponsored initiatives to end the violence. In Melbourne, the Conference on Strategic Development Planning for Timor called on the UN to resume a dialogue with Indonesia and Portugal, aimed at disarming militia, reducing Indonesia's military presence, and realistic options for a peacekeeping presence before the ballot.⁵⁹²

Downer tried to dispute the evidence of Indonesian military atrocities at Liquiça:

"Well, look, they [the military] were present, I understand, at the incident but there again, there's a debate about what part they played. They clearly didn't themselves kill people, but there is an argument, about whether they did try to stop the fighting or they didn't do enough to try to stop the fighting, and the trouble is it's very hard given we ourselves had no eyewitnesses there, to be able to prove the case either way."⁵⁹³

Downer tried to minimise the severity of the violence, cautioning that "some incidents" should be expected because the Timorese were divided on the question of independence, and lecturing pro-independence and pro-integration groups to "exercise restraint."⁵⁹⁴ Downer contradicted the

⁵⁸⁸ Part 7.2. "Unlawful killings and enforced disappearances," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1065-1066.

⁵⁸⁹ Lindsay Murdoch, "Riot Squad 'took part in Massacre,'" *SMH*, April 9, 1999.

⁵⁹⁰ Gerry van Klinken, "Habibie's fatal flaw: failing to end military privilege," *Age*, April 15, 1999; "Amnesty says Indonesian military destabilise Timor," *Reuters*, April 16, 1999.

⁵⁹¹ ETRA, "Urgent International Action Needed to save lives in East Timor," news release, April 17, 1999, <https://etan.org/et99/april/11-17/17urgen.htm>

⁵⁹² "CNRT Conference Statement," CNRT, East-Timor List, accessed August 15, 2017, <http://etan.org/et99/april/3-10/9cnrt.htm>

⁵⁹³ Andrew Fowler, "The Ties that Bind: The Story behind the East Timor crisis and how it plunged Australian-Indonesian relations to an all-time low," *Four Corners*, aired February 14 (Australia: ABC TV, 2000), television program transcript, <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/s99352.htm>

⁵⁹⁴ Murdoch, "Riot Squad," Peter Cole-Adams, "Disarm Paramilitary Groups, Downer Demands," *SMH*, April 8, 1999.

DIO's 8 April Brief that confirmed, "ABRI is culpable whether it actively took part in the violence, or simply let it occur."⁵⁹⁵

On 17 April, Indonesian security and militia forces killed 19 independence supporters and severely injured others in Dili. The massacre followed a large pro-independence rally, which inaugurated the Dili-based militia group, Aitarak.⁵⁹⁶

Australian journalists published credible, eyewitness accounts about ABRI's involvement in the Dili massacre.⁵⁹⁷ Journalists challenged Downer's "rogue elements" theory, arguing that ABRI orchestrated the violence in Timor to prevent an agreement for a Popular Consultation at the upcoming Tripartite Talks.⁵⁹⁸ David Jenkins wrote:

"With each new atrocity in Timor it is becoming increasingly difficult to argue that local Indonesian army officers are off on a frolic of their own...

This is not the way the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) works. Local commanders are doing what their superiors – or a significant number of them – want them to do."⁵⁹⁹

Activists demanded the Government suspend military co-operation and economic assistance to Indonesia, and rallied trade unions to boycott Indonesian shipping and airlines, to pressure Jakarta to accept UN peacekeepers.⁶⁰⁰ Australian public support for UN intervention was widely based on Australia's moral obligation to repay Timorese assistance during WWII, due in part, to the close timing of the Dili massacre in Timor and the ANZAC Day of remembrance in Australia.⁶⁰¹

The Government acted swiftly to defend the Indonesian military. On 27 April, Howard, Habibie and senior Australian and Indonesian diplomats met at an urgent summit meeting in Bali. At the

⁵⁹⁵ Ball, "Silent Witness," 46.

⁵⁹⁶ Part 7.2. "Unlawful Killings and Enforced Disappearances," in CAVR, *Chega! The Final Report*, 2: 1070-1071.

⁵⁹⁷ Tim Dodd, "Army 'stood by as activists slain,'" *Australian Financial Review*, April 19, 1999.

⁵⁹⁸ Mark Dodd, "Milita law," *SMH*, April 24, 1999; Peter Hartcher, "Army is lying in wait for independence voters," *Australian Financial Review*, May 1, 1999; Hamish McDonald, "Impulsive Chief ignored ABRI," *SMH*, April 20, 1999; Louise Williams, "Double Dealing in the dark to sabotage peace process," *SMH*, April 20, 1999; "Time to draw the Timor Line," *SMH*, April 20, 1999.

⁵⁹⁹ David Jenkins, "Frankenstein Monster," *SMH*, April 20, 1999.

⁶⁰⁰ Brendan Nicholson, "Labor Call to Raise Indonesia Pressure," *Age*, April 20, 1999; Lindsay Murdoch and Peter Cole-Adams, "Freedom slaughtered," *SMH*, April 19, 1999.

⁶⁰¹ Geoffrey Barker, "Timor: Australia acts...At last!" *Australian Financial Review*, April 24, 1999; Brendan Nicholson, "We owe the people of Timor, says old War Horse who will not forget," *Age*, April 20, 1999; Carolyn Webb, "Lest we forget," *Age*, April 21, 1999; "Building bridges in Bali," *Australian Financial Review*, April 24, 1999.

Bali Summit, Howard praised Habibie's decision to accept a UN police presence to advise Indonesian police on security in Timor. Howard praised Wiranto's commitment to 'peace and stability' in Timor, exemplified by a recent peace agreement between pro-independence and pro-integration representatives.⁶⁰² One week later, Howard reported that security in Timor had improved significantly, in contrast to Australian intelligence that directly linked General Wiranto to militia leaders.⁶⁰³

The Government's actions had the desired effect of providing diplomatic cover to the Indonesian military. On 5 May, the UN and Portugal, with Australian encouragement, granted Indonesia the sole responsibility for security in Timor, in an agreement for a popular consultation to be held in August.⁶⁰⁴

The 5 May agreements reinforced the Indonesian military's commitment to prevent an independent Timor. Senior Indonesian Generals continued to believe that a proxy war against independence supporters would guarantee an autonomy vote in Timor. However, control over security in Timor would now allow the military to begin to develop a contingency plan to deny an independent Timor, by reversing the result of an independence vote. Australian defence planners began preparations for *Operation Spitfire*; a limited military evacuation of foreign observers that would allow the Indonesian military to act with impunity to deny Timor's independence.⁶⁰⁵

Evidence about ABRI's plan of destruction in Timor soon emerged. In July, the SMH published excerpts of a leaked Indonesian report, "General Assessment if Option 1 fails" dated 3 July. The report, authored by the Deputy Chairman of the Indonesian Task Force for the Popular Consultation, Maj. Gen (ret.). H.R. Garnadi, advised Chairman Feisal Tanjung to prepare for a likely independence vote, and develop a contingency plan for the destruction of "facilities and other vital objects" in Timor.⁶⁰⁶

The Government tried to manage public concern, by placing Australia's objection to ABRI activity in Timor firmly on the diplomatic record. By August, Australia had made 120

⁶⁰² Tony Wright, "Following a path of blind faith, Howard takes a walk in the dark," *Age*, April 28, 1999.

⁶⁰³ Ball, "Silent Witness," 47-49; John Lyons, "The secret Timor dossier," *The Bulletin with Newsweek*, October 12, 1999.

⁶⁰⁴ Evidence to Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Canberra, 10 April 2000, 1034 (Anthony Kevin).

⁶⁰⁵ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 64.

⁶⁰⁶ Mark Dodd, "Jakarta to Abandon Free Timor," *SMH*, July 20, 1999; Mark Dodd, "Fears of bloodbath grow as militia's stockpile arms," *SMH*, July 26, 1999.

representations on Timor to Indonesia.⁶⁰⁷ Australia's diplomatic representations allowed the Government to claim that the matter of security in Timor had been "taken up" with Indonesia, and express confidence in the future behaviour of Indonesia's security forces. Thus, after SMH published excerpts of the Garnardi document, Downer travelled to Dili and predicted a peaceful ballot, suggesting that the Indonesian military, "will start to behave in a more neutral way and there are some signs of improvement."⁶⁰⁸

4.4 Containing international pressure

The Government consistently argued that international intervention in Timor would undermine the prospects for reconciliation between Timor's 'warring factions.' On 25 February, US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth met senior Australian diplomats Ashton Calvert and Peter Varghese in Washington. Roth argued that "a full-scale peacekeeping operation" would be essential to ensure security in Timor after a potential independence vote. Calvert opposed peacekeepers, arguing:

"One of the central themes to achieving a resolution was to convince the Timorese they had to sort themselves out, and to dispel the idea that the UN was going to solve all their problems while they indulged in vendetta and bloodletting."

Calvert argued that Indonesia could provide security in Timor after the ballot, reminding Roth about the "positive tendencies" to General Wiranto's approach. Calvert then suggested that Australia would not be prepared to send a peacekeeping contingent "into a bloodbath" in Timor.⁶⁰⁹ Calvert's confusion suggests that the Government expected post-Ballot violence in Timor, and actively worked against the organisation of a peacekeeping force.

Roth rejected Australia's "peacekeeping at arm's length" as "essentially defeatist," and sought Australian intelligence material that detailed the command structure between ABRI and militia.⁶¹⁰ Indonesian Ambassador McCarthy and US Ambassador Peacock consistently refused Roth's requests.⁶¹¹

Meanwhile, Downer argued publicly that reconciliation between warring Timorese factions was essential to peace in Timor. Downer tried to explain the Government's position:

⁶⁰⁷ Evidence to Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Canberra, 13 August 1999 (John Dauth).

⁶⁰⁸ Sian Poell, "Message of hope for Dili," *Australian*, July 31, 1999

⁶⁰⁹ Lyons, "The secret Timor dossier."

⁶¹⁰ Ball, "Silent Witness," 52.

⁶¹¹ Marian Wilkinson, "Why we kept Timor secrets from the US," *SMH*, August 13, 1999.

“We hope that there won’t be a need for a peacekeeping force because if you need a peacekeeping force, you need a peace to keep and peace first has to be negotiated and we hope that when the peace is negotiated it will be a peaceful peace that won’t require a peacekeeping force.”⁶¹²

Australia’s Chief of the Army, Lieutenant-General Frank Hickling, tried to simplify Downer’s message: “If the warring parties are not prepared to reach a settlement there is no point in sending peacekeepers.”⁶¹³ The Government added credibility to General Wiranto’s comments that the situation in Timor did not meet the ‘criteria’ for a peacekeeping operation.⁶¹⁴

The US remained concerned. In June, the US Defence Force Pacific Command requested Australian participation in a possible, US peace-enforcement operation in Timor after the ballot. The Commander of the Australian Theatre that would be responsible for the deployment of troops, Air Vice Marshal Treloar, received the request; a deliberate decision on the part of the US to communicate directly with the Commander best placed to advise the Government. Unsurprisingly, the Government rejected the US request as “premature” and “damaging.”⁶¹⁵

The Government continued to express confidence in Indonesia’s security forces and dismiss international concern. During a visit to the US in July, Howard downplayed the urgent need for a peacekeeping operation in Timor:

“We discussed Indonesia and Timor at very great length over lunch. I said that Indonesia deserved from the world perhaps a little more credit and a little more praise and understanding for the transition that was occurring in that country toward a more democratic system of government.”⁶¹⁶

⁶¹² Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 65.

⁶¹³ Geoffrey Barker, “Army Chief against peacekeeping role,” *Australian Financial Review*, April 15, 1999

⁶¹⁴ Tim Dodd, “Timor peace process in doubt after massacre,” *Australian Financial Review*, April 8, 1999.

⁶¹⁵ “Timor: We snub offer to send in the Marines,” *Age*, August 1, 1999.

⁶¹⁶ John Howard, interview by journalist, the White House, Washington, July 12, 1999, transcript, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-11008>

When questioned, Downer denied any difference of opinion between Canberra and Washington, asserting that there had been close agreement in all discussions in the past five months.⁶¹⁷

Brereton challenged Downer during question time in Parliament on 9 August. Brereton referred to the Roth-Calvert meeting, explaining that Roth had favoured a peacekeeping operation in Timor.⁶¹⁸ Brereton forced Downer to clarify that Roth had expressed a “personal view,” emphasising that official US policy toward Timor had never included a peacekeeping force.⁶¹⁹ Downer’s forced clarification, and the subsequent leak and publication of US intelligence requests, lent credibility to Brereton’s claim that the Government was working against a peacekeeping operation in Timor.⁶²⁰

Brereton also exposed the US Pacific Command’s request for an Australian military contingent to a peace-enforcement operation in Timor.⁶²¹ Downer denied knowledge of an US proposal.⁶²² However, the Age rapidly obtained the diplomatic cable of the US request. Within hours, Downer informed Parliament that Pacific Command had “informally” raised the “hypothetical” question of a peacekeeping operation. Downer stressed that this was not a “formal” US Government request, nor was it US Government “policy.”⁶²³

However, analysts astutely observed that Pacific Command made a direct request at a senior military level, and that it was conveyed to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the heads of their respective departments.⁶²⁴ If Australia agreed to the US proposal, the US may have

⁶¹⁷ DFAT, “Press Articles on Australia-US Discussions on East Timor,” news release, August 2, 1999, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=date-eLast;page=0;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FWQC06%22;rec=5;resCount=Default>

⁶¹⁸ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 August 1999, 8098 (Laurie Brereton).

⁶¹⁹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 August 1999, 8098 (Alexander Downer).

⁶²⁰ Laurie Brereton, “Downer’s deceit on peacekeeping in East Timor,” news release, August 9, 1999, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=date-eLast;page=5;query=Timor%20Date%3A01%2F08%2F1999%20%3E%3E%2031%2F08%2F1999%20Dataset%3Ahansardr,hansardr80,hansardrIndex,hansards,hansards80,hansardsIndex,pressrel,pressclp;rec=10;resCount=Default>

⁶²¹ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 August 1999, 8100 (Laurie Brereton).

⁶²² Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 August 1999, 8100 (Alexander Downer).

⁶²³ Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 August 1999, 8184 (Alexander Downer).

⁶²⁴ Laurie Brereton, “Downer’s deceit exposed,” news release, August 10, 1999, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=date-eLast;page=6;query=Timor%20Date%3A01%2F08%2F1999%20%3E%3E%2031%2F08%2F1999%20D>

4.5 ‘Scorched Earth’

4.6 The solidarity movement in action

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Darwin between 6 and 14 September.⁶³³ The evacuation of foreign witnesses enabled Indonesian security forces and militia to act without restriction.

The Government maintained the fiction of a civil war in Timor. On 5 September, Downer dismissed reports about Indonesian complicity to the violence in Timor, arguing,

“President Habibie, Mr Alatas, General Wiranto are all trying to do the right thing and some of the commanders are clearly trying to do the right thing.”

Downer apportioned responsibility for the violence to “some fairly wild elements” within the Indonesian military and pro-integration groups, who opposed the independence vote.⁶³⁴ The Government tried to contain pressure for immediate international intervention in Timor, by insisting that the UN and Australia would not “invade Indonesia.”⁶³⁵

Australian observers exposed the Indonesian military’s terror campaign in Timor. John Martinkus, an Australian Associated Press Journalist sheltering at the UN compound in Dili, reported that Indonesian troops and militia were engaged in a “very organised and very heavy military operation” to destroy Dili and “drive out” foreign observers.⁶³⁶ Louise Williams, an Australian journalist evacuated from Dili, reported “the deportation of perhaps a quarter of the population” and “the massacre of civilians seeking refuge in their own churches.”⁶³⁷

The visibility of Indonesian military force in Timor mobilised an angry public reaction.⁶³⁸ Australians called, faxed and emailed politicians, wrote letters to newspapers and overwhelmed talkback radio, demanding Government action.⁶³⁹ Downer described the widespread support for Australian intervention in Timor:

⁶³³ Bob Breen, *Mission Accomplished, East Timor* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2001), 7-14.

⁶³⁴ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 84.

⁶³⁵ Michael Gordon and Paul Daley, “Canberra steps up push for Peace Force,” *Age*, September 7, 1999.

⁶³⁶ Kerry O’Brien, “Soldiers loot and burn East Timorese capital,” *7:30 Report*, aired September 8 (Australia: ABC TV, 1999), television program transcript, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s50445.htm>

⁶³⁷ Hamish McDonald and Louise Williams, “To what end, Indonesia?” *Age*, September 11, 1999.

⁶³⁸ Henry S. Albinski, “Issues in Australian Foreign Policy: July to December 1999,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46, no. 2 (2000): 202. doi: 10.1111/1467-8497.00093; Lindsay Murdoch, Bernard Lagan, and Peter Cole-Adams, “Race against genocide,” *SMH*, September 7, 1999.

⁶³⁹ Shelley Gare, “Rage, rage against the sitting on hands,” *Australian*, September 11, 1999; Janine Macdonald, “Timor Outrage and Sadness Floods Politicians Offices,” *Age*, September 8, 1999; Damien Murphy, “Angry public talks the talk,” *SMH*, September 10, 1999.

‘The Australian public were screaming out, everybody was—I mean it wasn’t a party thing, a Left–Right thing—screaming out to do something to stop it. People were ringing up, crying over the phone, we had more calls on that issue than I’ve ever had in my life on anything.’⁶⁴⁰

An *Australian* opinion poll published on 12 September demonstrated that 77% of respondents favoured an Australian troop contribution to a UN peacekeeping force, with little divergence between Coalition and Labor supporters.⁶⁴¹

Serious protest action began on 6 September. Up to 1000 trade unionists and members of the Timorese community protested outside the Federal Cabinet offices in Melbourne. Activists in Sydney demonstrated outside the Garuda Airlines office, and held public masses outside the UN Information office, which attracted support from the Timorese community, Unions and humanitarian agencies such as Amnesty International.⁶⁴²

The size of public demonstrations in Sydney grew rapidly, due in part to the coordinated efforts of the AETA, Trade Unions, Churches, and other groups that established a broad organising committee, campaigned and distributed leaflets.⁶⁴³ On 11 September, more than 15, 000 people attended a rally held at Hyde Park in Sydney. Protestors then marched from Hyde Park through the CBD, with the crowd swelling to approximately 30, 000 people.⁶⁴⁴ Interest groups and the media raised awareness of public demonstrations, by publishing “protest diaries” of rallies held in capital cities.⁶⁴⁵

Public action occurred around Australia. Activists lit a fire that caused more than \$140, 000 in damage to the Indonesian Consulate in Perth.⁶⁴⁶ Demonstrators in Darwin targeted the Indonesian consulate with rocks, before tearing down and burning the Indonesian flag.⁶⁴⁷ Protestors in Canberra breached federal security and spray painted “shame Australia shame” over the entrance of Parliament House, whilst 500 people picketed the Indonesian Embassy. Activists

⁶⁴⁰ Greenlees and Garran, *Deliverance*, 245.

⁶⁴¹ “Opinion polling on Timor,” Newspoll Market Research, *Australian*, accessed February 25, 2017, http://polling.newspoll.com.au/image_uploads/cgi-lib.25638.1.0902timor.pdf

⁶⁴² Steve Waldon, “Do something now, that’s the message,” *Age*, September 7, 1999; “Protestors take anger to the streets/East Timor Betrayed,” *Australian*, 8 September, 1999

⁶⁴³ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 89-90.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 93-94.

⁶⁴⁵ “Protest Diary,” *Australian*, September 11, 1999.

⁶⁴⁶ “Australia’s Anger,” *Australian*, September 9, 1999

⁶⁴⁷ Andrea Carson and Richard Baker, “Bans and Boycotts: A Nation Acts,” *Age*, September 9, 1999

at Sydney Airport blockaded Garuda's check-in desk and departure gate, chanting, "Little Johnny Howard, nothing but a coward," reinforcing the demand that the Government 'act bravely.'⁶⁴⁸

Trade Unions added essential political weight to the campaign for Australian intervention in Timor. The Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, imposed national bans on all mail and telecommunication services to the Indonesian consulate and Indonesian businesses.⁶⁴⁹ Garbage workers refused to collect garbage from the Indonesian consulate in Sydney, and printing workers refused to accept paper products produced in Indonesia.⁶⁵⁰ Trade unions complicated trade from Australia to Indonesia. The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) prevented the loading of cargo on all Indonesia-bound ships at ports in Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide.⁶⁵¹ The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Australian Services Union and the Transport Workers Union banned the movement of goods, communications and postal services via Garuda Airlines.⁶⁵²

Public action forced the Government to abandon Australia's commitment to non-involvement in Timor. Public action changed official policy in a short period, because it built upon 24 years of sustained attention on Timor, and threatened to escalate, creating panic within the Government. Fernandes argues,

"Protests such as these, which threaten even more serious action, are significant to politicians, because they signal deep and wide support within the broader community that has been created over many years."⁶⁵³

Australian Governments could never conceal Indonesian military force in Timor from the Australian public eye. The Howard Government anticipated accelerating and widespread public action, and rapidly acted to allow international forces to enter Timor and prevent a political crisis in Australia.

⁶⁴⁸ Hamish Macdonald, Mark Metherell, Phil Cornford and Joseph Kerr, "Union Fires First Shot in National Blockade," *SMH*, September 7, 1999

⁶⁴⁹ Nina Field, "Unions ban Indonesian goods, services," *Australian Financial Review*, September 8, 1999.

⁶⁵⁰ Scott, *Last Flight*, 351-352.

⁶⁵¹ Brad Norington, "Patchy Response to Industrial Offensive," *SMH*, September 9, 1999.

⁶⁵² Brad Norington, "AWU will blockade outgoing air cargo and mail," *SMH*, September 10, 1999

⁶⁵³ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 113-114.

4.7 InterFET

On 7 September, the Government considered Australian leadership of a multinational peacekeeping operation in Timor for the first time. Defence rapidly established a Timor Policy Unit to provide military guidance and policy support to the Minister of Defence and Defence Executives. The Defence mission in 1999 did not require the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to be able to form or lead a peacekeeping force.⁶⁵⁴ Furthermore, contingency planning for an operation to secure Timor within an internal force was limited to the *Operation Spitfire* evacuation.⁶⁵⁵ The Policy Unit could only occupy temporary conference room at Defence Headquarters and relied on external infrastructure.⁶⁵⁶

On the same day, the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) determined four preconditions to Australian involvement in a peacekeeping operation: Indonesian agreement; a Security Council mandate that provided Chapter 7 authority to use ‘all necessary means;’ active support from regional partners, particularly major Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) member states; and US support. Facing escalating public action, and recognising the political cost of failing to act, it became clear to policymakers that InterFET would proceed if the four preconditions were met.⁶⁵⁷

The next day, the US agreed to support InterFET, meeting the first precondition.⁶⁵⁸ The Howard Government’s public demand for US ‘boots on the ground,’ and domestic contention about the value of the US alliance to Australia, forced a shift in Washington’s position, from reluctance to intervene to the desire to support an important strategic partner.⁶⁵⁹ US Secretary of Defence William Cohen later qualified that Australia never made a direct request for US combat troops. Policymakers in Washington and Canberra recognised that US intelligence, communications, logistic and other non-combat troop support would be sufficient assistance for international forces to defeat the militia and restore security in Timor. Rather, the Government was anxious to secure

⁶⁵⁴ Australian National Audit Office (ANOA), *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to Timor*, Audit Report No. 38 (Canberra: Australian National Audit Office, 2002), 27, 32.

⁶⁵⁵ Cotton, *East Timor*, 116

⁶⁵⁶ Fernandes, *Reluctant Saviour*, 95.

⁶⁵⁷ Hugh White, “The Road to InterFET: Reflections on Australian Strategic Decisions Concerning East Timor, December 1998 – September 1999,” *Security Challenges* 4, no. 1 (2008): 82-83, <https://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/Resources/Files/vol4no1White.pdf>

⁶⁵⁸ Greenless and Garran, *Deliverance*, 246-247.

⁶⁵⁹ Gary Alcorn, “How we swayed the US heart,” *Age*, September 14, 1999; Larry Dinger, *East Timor and US Foreign Policy: Making Sausage*, (report, United States National War College, National Defense University, 2000), <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a432208.pdf>

– as fast as possible – the weight of US ‘boots,’ which was essential to force the Indonesian military to permit a peacekeeping force.⁶⁶⁰

The involvement of the US added credibility to Australia’s diplomatic campaign. Diplomats lobbied ASEAN member states to support InterFET at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) summit, held in Auckland between 10 and 13 September.⁶⁶¹ The Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand subsequently contributed varying degrees of support, meeting the second precondition to InterFET.⁶⁶² Meanwhile, the US began to impose severe diplomatic pressure on Indonesia.⁶⁶³

General Wiranto began to capitulate. During a visit to Dili on 11 September, Wiranto ambiguously suggested, “We cannot rule out the possibility of accelerating the arrival of the peace-keeping force.”⁶⁶⁴ Washington sensed the opportunity to force Wiranto’s hand. At an emergency debate in the Security Council, US envoy Richard Holbrooke threatened that Jakarta would cross, “the point of no return in international relations,” if it failed to allow peacekeepers immediate access to Timor.⁶⁶⁵ Within hours, Habibie invited Secretary General Annan to deploy a peacekeeping force of ‘friendly nations’ to Timor.⁶⁶⁶ Wiranto’s presence during Habibie’s announcement clearly signaled the military’s acquiescence to international intervention.⁶⁶⁷

On 15 September, the UN Security Council authorised an international peacekeeping force to restore peace and security in Timor, meeting Australia’s final precondition. Under the command of Australian Maj. Gen. Peter Cosgrove, InterFET troops deployed to Timor on 20 September.⁶⁶⁸

4.8 Fulfilling Pritchett’s prediction: Australia-Indonesia relations after InterFET

The Timor crisis immediately affected Australia’s defence co-operation with Indonesia. The undeniable evidence of Indonesian military atrocities, militia links and internal security function caused public anger, forcing the Government to suspend all joint exercises and military training

⁶⁶⁰ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 193-194.

⁶⁶¹ “APEC Stops Short of Calling for Intl Force,” *Dow Jones Newswire*, September 10, 1999.

⁶⁶² Cotton, *East Timor*, 126-127.

⁶⁶³ “The Fate of East Timor; In Clinton’s Words: East Timor, Waco, Clemency Offer, and Other Issues,” *The New York Times*, September 10, 1999.

⁶⁶⁴ Tim Dodd and Peter Hartcher, “Humiliation for Jakarta,” *Australian Financial Review*, September 13, 1999.

⁶⁶⁵ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 199.

⁶⁶⁶ DFAT, *East Timor in Transition*, 137.

⁶⁶⁷ Fernandes, *The Independence of East Timor*, 199.

⁶⁶⁸ ANOA, *Management of Australian Defence*, 22.

programs with Indonesia.⁶⁶⁹ The decision downgraded defence relations and reversed Australia's long-term commitment to military co-operation with Indonesia, despite public opposition.

Negative public opinion prevented the rapid restoration of Australia's defence program with Indonesia. In 2000, the Senate advised that co-operation should only resume after the militia were neutralised, the refugee crisis was resolved and the Indonesian armed forces became a professional defence force.⁶⁷⁰ Domestic opposition prevented the Government from agreeing to counter-terrorism training between the Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment and *Kopassus* after the Bali Bombings in October 2002.⁶⁷¹ In 2004, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade opposed re-engagement with *Kopassus* pending "sustained radical improvement" in human rights.⁶⁷² The decline in bilateral defence co-operation gave effect to Pritchett's prediction.

The Timor crisis eroded mutual confidence in bilateral relations. Indonesian elites reacted to Australian leadership of InterFET with extreme distrust. The Indonesian newspaper, *Kompas*, expressed:

"Australia is more insistent than other countries in wanting to send troops to East Timor. Australia is so insistent that it raises the question of what its motive is." ⁶⁷³

Elites argued that Australia had betrayed Indonesia by 'detaching' Timor, and would intervene in similarly restive Indonesian provinces.⁶⁷⁴ Similarly, elites asserted that Australia exploited Indonesia in a moment of weakness to project Australian power and influence in the region.⁶⁷⁵ On 16 September, Indonesia terminated the AMS, arguing that Australia's "attitude and actions" violated the spirit of the agreement.⁶⁷⁶ As Pritchett predicted, Indonesia perceived Australia to be an "adversary" after the Timor crisis.

⁶⁶⁹ Chalk, *Australian Foreign and Defence Policy*, 58.

⁶⁷⁰ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor: Final Report*, 206-207.

⁶⁷¹ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, *Near Neighbours Good Neighbours*, 39-41.

⁶⁷² *Ibid*, 40-42.

⁶⁷³ Tim Dodd, "Even the tolerant suspect ulterior motive," *Australian Financial Review*, September 11, 1999.

⁶⁷⁴ Ikrar Nusa Bhakti, "Howard sets back RI-Canberra ties," *Jakarta Post*, December 9, 1999.

⁶⁷⁵ Dewi Anggraeni, "Jakarta's simmering anger over Timor," *Jakarta Post*, August 10, 1999; Hal Hill and Chris Manning, "Indonesia-Australia ties – What went wrong?" *Jakarta Post*, November 30, 1999.

⁶⁷⁶ Don Greenless and Robert Garran, "Jakarta severs security ties with Canberra," *Australian*, September 17, 1999.

Contention about a “Howard Doctrine” reinforced Indonesian anxiety. Less than one week after the first Australian troops arrived in Dili, Howard endorsed the notion of a “Howard Doctrine” that would see Australia undertake future peacekeeping operations as “deputy sheriff” to the US.⁶⁷⁷ The Howard Doctrine reinforced Indonesian suspicions that Australia would expand its regional influence at Indonesia’s expense. Indonesian commentator Rizal Sukuma asserted, “Many Indonesian’s rightly or wrongly, now view Australia as the greatest threat to Indonesia’s national pride, security and territorial unity.”⁶⁷⁸ In 2001, Peter Chalk suggested that bilateral relations were “captive to Indonesian suspicions” of Australia’s “true intentions.”⁶⁷⁹ As Pritchett predicted, defence relations became less secure.

Indonesian hostility influenced a counter-reaction in Australia. Commentators argued that the termination of the AMS, which had symbolised trust in defence relations, ended the ‘peace dividend’ between Australia and Indonesia.⁶⁸⁰ Peter Hartcher warned:

“A nation will customarily break off a defence pact as a prelude to war. Indonesia is not about to invade, but it is a marker that Australia is entering its most potentially dangerous entanglement since WWII.”⁶⁸¹

The “contingency of an unfriendly Indonesia” gained credibility in Australia, as Pritchett foresaw.

Australia heightened defence expenditure and readiness after InterFET. The Defence White Paper *Our Future Force* (2000) increased defence expenditure over a ten year period, and advised that Australia must prepare to be “the largest force contributor” to future peacekeeping operations in the region.⁶⁸² Indonesia believed Australia’s defence posture signalled future Western interventionism in Indonesian affairs.⁶⁸³ On the day that the White Paper was released, Dewi Fortuna Anwar forecast “a security dilemma” between Australia and Indonesia.⁶⁸⁴ In 2004, the

⁶⁷⁷ Fred Brenchely, “The Howard Defence Doctrine,” *Bulletin with Newsweek* 117, no. 6193 (1999): 22-25.

⁶⁷⁸ Greenless and Garra, *Deliverance*, 229.

⁶⁷⁹ Chalk, *Australian Foreign and Defence Policy*, 56.

⁶⁸⁰ Greg Sheridan, “It’s a blow to lose the pact we had to have/East Timor – The Diplomatic Fallout,” *Australian*, September 17, 1999;

⁶⁸¹ Peter Hartcher, “Pattern of dangerous escalation takes hold,” *Australian Financial Review*, September 17, 1999

⁶⁸² Department of Defence, *Defence 2000 Our Future Defence Force* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2000), xvii, 48.

⁶⁸³ Cotton, *East Timor*, 99.

⁶⁸⁴ Kerry O’Brien, “Govt unveils Defence White Paper,” *7:30 Report*, aired December 6 (Australia: ABC TV, 2000), television program transcript, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s220773.htm>

Senate acknowledged that Indonesia's "lingering misunderstandings around East Timor" remained the fundamental obstacle to constructive defence relations with Indonesia.⁶⁸⁵

InterFET sparked Indonesian nationalist sentiment that damaged Canberra's political relations with Jakarta. The Indonesian public believed that InterFET was an Australian tactic to 'bully' and 'demean' Indonesia.⁶⁸⁶ Habibie's policy advisor, Dewi Fortuna Awar described,

"People are no longer really focusing on what happened in Timor, but on how Indonesia has been insulted...Indonesia has always been very touchy about being pushed around by outside countries."⁶⁸⁷

Protestors targeted the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and Consulate General in Surabaya, and burnt Australian flags in a series of mass demonstrations.⁶⁸⁸ Indonesian media reported that Australian InterFET soldiers engaged in torture, rape and theft, evoking sensitive comparisons with Indonesia's recent colonial past.⁶⁸⁹

Widespread anger at Australia's 'betrayal' led to calls for the lowest reduction, or termination of, diplomatic relations. As early as 5 September, Abdurrahman Wahid argued that Indonesia was not "a cockroach nation" and proposed, "If we have to have diplomatic ties, make it a very cold relationship and if necessary, set it up at the lowest level without having an embassy there."⁶⁹⁰ After Wahid became President in October 1998, Indonesia restricted ministerial relations, and President Wahid delayed a number of official visits to Australia.⁶⁹¹

The crisis in Timor poisoned relations between Canberra and Jakarta at the very point of Indonesian political reform that Australia's strategic policy had aimed to achieve. Paul Kelly described,

⁶⁸⁵ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, *Near Neighbours Good Neighbours*, 42-44.

⁶⁸⁶ Bilveer Singh, *Defence relations between Australia and Indonesia in the post-Cold War Era* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 119-120.

⁶⁸⁷ Greenlees and Garran, *Deliverance*, 296.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid, 295-297; Albinski, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy," 197.

⁶⁸⁹ DFAT, *East Timor in Transition*, 145.

⁶⁹⁰ "Habibie calls on the nation to accept E. Timor results," *Jakarta Post*, September 5, 1999.

⁶⁹¹ Lincoln Wright, "Indonesia cancels Canberra meeting," *Canberra Times*, October 25, 1999.

“The reality is that as Indonesia democratises, Australia’s relations with Jakarta are the worst for decades. The Timor legacy has left a deep psychological divide between Australia and Indonesia. That it will last for a long time should not be doubted.”⁶⁹²

Commentators qualified that the damage to bilateral relations would take years to overcome.⁶⁹³

The Howard Government actively defended Indonesian sovereignty in Timor. However, the end of the bipartisan consensus enabled the public to contest the official policy effectively, and public action in the week 6 – 12 September 1999 forced the government to accept responsibility for InterFET to prevent a political crisis in Australia. Public action successfully changed official policy, because it built upon 24 years of activism that had sustained public attention on Timor, raised the political cost of failing to act and created panic within the Government. Australian Governments could never conceal Indonesian military force in Timor, and Australian intervention in Timor fractured relations with Indonesia, fulfilling Pritchett’s prediction.

⁶⁹² Paul Kelly, “Triumphalism masks a deep strain,” *Australian*, December 1, 1999.

⁶⁹³ Richard Woolcott, “What Australia lost in Timor,” *SMH*, March 8, 2003.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis explained why Timor complicated Australia's relations with Indonesia, by investigating the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion. Australian Governments pursued good relations with Indonesia, by providing diplomatic and military support to Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and acting to neutralise public opinion in Australia. The solidarity movement exposed Indonesian military force in Timor, undermining government efforts to neutralise public opinion. Public opposition to official policy complicated Australia-Indonesia relations.

The policy divide between Woolcott and Pritchett was central to the argument of this thesis. In August 1975, the Indonesian military engineered a civil conflict in Timor and urgently requested Prime Minister Whitlam's views on direct intervention to 'restore order.' Woolcott argued that the Government must pursue good relations with Indonesia, by supporting Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and neutralising public opinion in Australia. Pritchett provided a significant counterpoint to Woolcott's policy. Pritchett predicted that Indonesia's incorporation of Timor would involve military force on a scale that Australian Governments could not conceal, thereby evoking a strong domestic reaction in Australia and straining Australia-Indonesia relations.

This thesis tested Pritchett's prediction. It demonstrated how the solidarity movement exposed Indonesian military force in Timor, which mobilised public opinion, strained Australia-Indonesia relations and gave effect to Pritchett's prediction. In September 1999, public support for an independent Timor forced the Howard Government to abandon past policy and accept responsibility for InterFET. Public protests built upon 24 years of activism that had maintained public attention on Timor, and threatened to escalate, forcing the Government to act quickly to allow peacekeepers into Timor and prevent a political crisis in Australia. The thesis concluded that Australian governments could never conceal Indonesian military force in Timor from the Australian public eye, and discussed how Australian intervention in Timor fractured relations with Indonesia, fulfilling Pritchett's prediction.

The thesis began by suggesting that Indonesia is a territory of enduring strategic importance to Australia. Australian strategic assessments have recognised that, because of its size and geography, a stable, united and friendly Indonesia could reinforce the security of Australian territory. Australian Governments established friendly and co-operative relations with Soeharto's New Order Regime, to encourage Indonesian stability and unity and secure Australia's defence

interest. The thesis argued that, because of Indonesia's importance to Australia, Australian Governments also supported Indonesia's incorporation of Timor.

The thesis built upon previous studies that investigated Australian foreign policy towards Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. The thesis addressed a critical omission in these studies, which was that the pragmatic assessment of Australia's national interest – Indonesia's incorporation of Timor – conflicted with Australian public support for self-determination. Therefore, the thesis demonstrated how Australian Governments pursued good relations with Indonesia, by providing diplomatic and military support to Indonesia's incorporation of Timor, and acting to neutralise public opinion in Australia.

A pro-Jakarta lobby dominated Australian foreign policy towards Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. After April 1974, senior policymakers within the lobby argued that an independent Timor would be a non-viable economic and political entity, and encouraged Indonesia's incorporation of Timor. Astute policymakers, and an emerging solidarity movement, pointed out that these basic assumptions were flawed, and began to argue in support of an independent Timor. Senior policymakers within the lobby continued to work against the prospect of an independent Timor, because it would provide a democratic alternative to Soeharto's New Order Regime, challenge Indonesian unity and stability, and threaten Australia's defence interest.

Australian foreign policy was bipartisan. This bipartisan consensus was critical for Australian governments dismiss public support for self-determination as 'unrealistic,' because the Opposition would not provide a credible alternative policy in support of an independent Timor. In 1998, the ALP fractured Australia's bipartisan foreign policy, and consistent political pressure forced the Howard Government onto the defensive.

The thesis also complemented research about the role of the Australian solidarity movement in Timor's independence. The solidarity movement exposed Indonesian military force in Timor, which mobilised public opinion. In September 1999, public action forced a change in official policy, because it built upon 24 years of public attention on Timor, and threatened to escalate. The thesis contributed to the understanding about how the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion emerged, why it continued, and the enduring consequences for Australia-Indonesia relations.

The thesis presented a political argument about why Timor complicated Australia-Indonesia relations. The first chapter examined the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion between 1974 and 1983. The Whitlam Government pursued good relations with

Indonesia, by encouraging Indonesia's incorporation of Timor, and acting to neutralise public opinion.

The appearance of self-determination in Timor was of vital importance for the Government to manage public opinion. Policymakers placed support for self-determination in Timor on the diplomatic and public record, tried to minimise political debate, and prepared "non-attributable background briefings" which expressed sympathy for Indonesian interests in Timor, noted Australia's support for self-determination, and concealed policymakers' close involvement in Indonesian military planning.

Indonesia's incorporation of Timor involved force on a scale that Australian Governments could never conceal. On 16 October 1975, Indonesian Special Forces executed the Balibo Five to ensure that the journalists never exposed the truth about Indonesia's military intervention in Timor. The Government acted to contain the public impact in Australia, by insisting that the journalists were "missing." By choosing to 'cover up' Indonesian involvement at Balibo, the Government locked itself into a strategy to pursue good relations with Indonesia, by supporting Indonesia's incorporation of Timor and neutralising public opinion.

The Government's strategy conflicted with activists, who exposed Indonesian military force at Balibo. Activists ensured that the Australian public understood events at Balibo, which mobilised public opinion. Australian protests and demonstrations angered Indonesia, and gave effect to Pritchett's prediction.

Indonesia's invasion of Timor in December 1975 caused the solidarity movement to accelerate and grow. Australia's bipartisan foreign policy enabled the Fraser Government to dismiss domestic opposition without political consequence. The Government restricted communication links between activists in Australia and Fretilin in Timor, and argued that Indonesia's incorporation of Timor was 'irreversible,' in order to neutralise public support for self-determination.

The Government extended significant diplomatic support to Indonesia. Australia abstained from voting on UNGA Resolutions on Timor after 1976, recognised the *de facto* legitimacy of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1978, and extended *de jure* recognition in January 1979. The Government legitimised Indonesian Administration of Timor, during a time when ongoing military campaigns had caused a humanitarian crisis.

The solidarity movement complicated the Government's efforts to repair relations with Indonesia. Between 1977 and 1982, the solidarity movement continuously exposed Indonesian military force in Timor, which sustained critical public opinion. Activists' efforts to contest the official policy

resulted in a 1982 Senate inquiry into Indonesian Administration of Timor. The inquiry forced the Hawke Government to send a Parliamentary Delegation to Timor to contest witness evidence, as the third chapter demonstrated.

The third chapter examined the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion between 1983 and 1996. In 1983, an Australian Parliamentary Delegation traveled to Timor, and reported an effective Indonesian Administration and improved humanitarian conditions. The Report enabled the Government to dismiss public support for self-determination, and reverse the ALP Platform in 1984.

In 1985, activists in Darwin re-established radio contact with Fretilin in Timor. Activists revealed ongoing Indonesian military campaigns in Timor, which challenged the basis of the 1984 Resolution, and renewed public attention on Timor. The bipartisan consensus was critical for the Government to manage domestic opposition, and recognise Indonesian sovereignty in Timor in 1986. In December 1989, Australia and Indonesia signed the *Timor Gap Treaty*; founded upon the principle of Indonesian sovereignty in Timor.

The Santa Cruz massacre reinforced the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion. The Government denied that Santa Cruz was a premeditated act, and deferred responsibility for the massacre to an “undisciplined subgroup” within the Indonesian military. Video footage and credible eyewitness accounts about Indonesian military atrocities at Santa Cruz contradicted the Government’s public position, and sparked an angry public reaction in Australia. Trade Union action and public demonstrations met with an Indonesian counter-reaction, causing tension in Australia-Indonesia relations.

The Keating Government acted to contain the public impact of Santa Cruz and prevent any further damage to Australia-Indonesia relations. Australian diplomats co-operated with Indonesian operatives to conceal ABRI’s involvement at Santa Cruz and a second massacre in Dili. In 1992, the AIDIB began a five-year development assistance program to Timor. The Government’s policy overlooked self-determination and military oppression as causes of the conflict, and legitimised Indonesian Administration in Timor. The Government strengthened Australia’s defence relations with Indonesia, culminating in the AMS.

New interest groups emerged in Australia after Santa Cruz, and undermined the Government’s efforts to neutralise public opinion. The Mantiri Affair, the Sanctuary Movement and contention over the AMS complicated Australia’s efforts to consolidate relations with Indonesia in the Government’s last year in office. Public attention on Timor did not falter after Santa Cruz, with enduring consequences for the Howard Government.

The fourth chapter examined the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion between 1996 and 1999. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Timor's independence leaders deepened the conflict between Australian foreign policy and public opinion. The end of the bipartisan consensus between the ALP and LNP in January 1998 was a critical development that created a new political space for the solidarity movement to contest the official policy effectively.

In mid-1998, the Indonesian military developed a terror campaign to prevent an independent Timor. The Howard Government acted as Jakarta's foreign ally, by containing the pressure for international intervention in Timor. As Fernandes study demonstrated, the Government consistently defended Indonesian military atrocities in Timor, and argued that reconciliation between Timor's 'warring factions' was essential to restoring security. The solidarity movement continually exposed Indonesian military force in Timor, which mobilised public attention and forced the Government to defend Australia's policy.

Sustained public attention on Timor was critical to changing official policy. In September 1999, Australian observers in Timor exposed the Indonesian military's terror campaign, sparking nation-wide protests in Australia and forcing the Government to accept responsibility for InterFET. Public action changed official policy, because it built upon decades of attention on Timor, and threatened to escalate. This threat of future action exemplifies that Australian Governments could never conceal Indonesian military force in Timor from the Australian public eye. Australian intervention in Timor fractured relations with Indonesia, along the precise lines that Pritchett foresaw.

The thesis is one, limited study in the field of Australia-Indonesia-Timor and there are many opportunities for further research. The end of the bipartisan consensus was a critical development in Timor's independence campaign, because it created a new, political space that enabled the solidarity movement to contest the official policy effectively. An investigation into the Senate debates on Timor between 1998 and 1999 could provide important insight into the acceleration of political pressure on the Government, and demonstrate how the ALP policy shift contributed to forcing the official policy to change in September 1999.

Timor complicated Australia's relations with Indonesia for 24 years. Australian foreign policy failed on its own terms of realism, pragmatism and a hard-headed assessment of the national interest. Thus, this thesis suggests that ordinary Australians— who do not usually have a voice in foreign affairs — can decisively influence Australian foreign policy when they have the power to do so.

Appendix & Bibliography

6.1 List of Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABRI	Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACR	Australian Catholic Relief
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AETA	Australia East Timor Association
AFFET	Australians for a Free East Timor
AICD	Association for International Co-operation and Disarmament
AIDAB	Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANOA	Australian National Audit Office
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
APODETI	Timorese Popular Democratic Association
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASIAT	Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid to Timor
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
ASTD	Timorese Social Democratic Association
AUS	Australian Union of Students
AWD	Action for World Development
BAKIN	State Intelligence Coordinating Agency
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CAVR	Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation
CIET	Campaign for an Independent East Timor
CNRM	National Council of Maubere Resistance
CNRT	National Council of East Timorese Resistance
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs (Australia)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DOD	Department of Defence
DPM&C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australia)
DRET	Democratic Republic of East Timor

ETHRC	East Timor Human Rights Centre
ETISC	East Timor International Support Centre
ETN	East Timor News
ETRA	East Timor Relief Association
FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor
HANKAM	Department of Defence and Security (Indonesia)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
JIO	Joint Intelligence Organisation
KOPKAMTIB	Operations Command for the Restoration of Security and Order
LNP	Liberal National Party
OPSUS	Special Operations
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
SAS	Special Air Service Regiment (Australia)
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SMH	The Sydney Morning Herald
TIS	Timor Information Service
TSLA	Timor-Leste Studies Association
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WWF	Waterside Workers Federation

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