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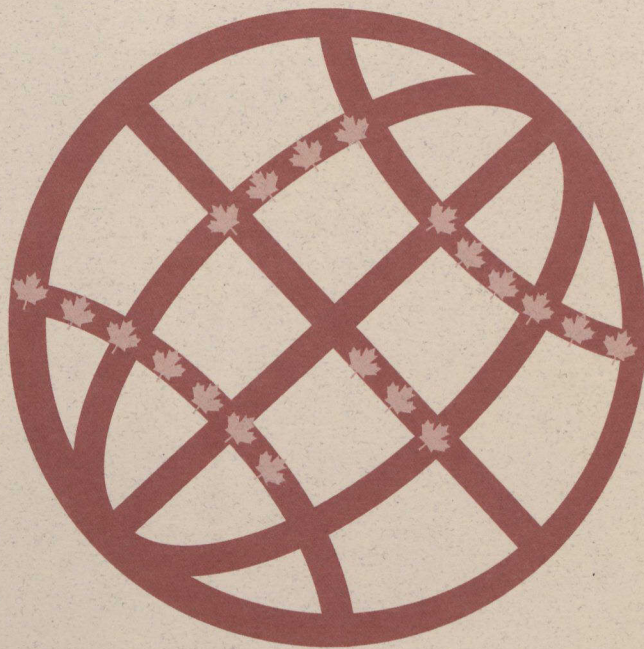


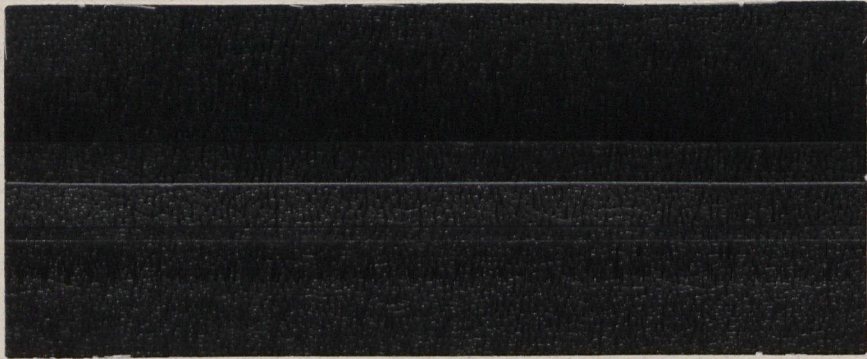
Centre Canadien
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Policy Options

REPORT ON EAST TIMOR ROUND TABLE

Ottawa
February 22, 1999





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REPORT ON EAST TIMOR ROUND TABLE

Ottawa, February 22, 1999

I. BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR

The current situation in East Timor (as described by four East Timorese guests) can be characterized as extremely volatile and fluid. According to Florentino Sarmento of the Kommer Blok, a group of young advocates of independence and those supporting integration are struggling to gain control of the East Timorese society that have developed as a result of the conflict between the East Timorese and the Indonesian government. The "revenge" killings are increasing, incidents of political assassinations are occurring, and widespread lawlessness has come to characterize everyday life. The Indonesian military is using the pre-emptive tactic of attacking villages, either in desperation or for the military gain. A "culture of violence" is also resulting in an increase in gross human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrest, detention, arbitrary execution, disappearances, torture, rape, sexual abuse, mutilation, and the removal of citizens from their residences. Teachers, nurses, doctors, activists, and other essential personnel have already begun to leave the region as the wave of violence intensifies, leading to a societal disintegration.

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Notwithstanding past and present efforts of the Canadian government, including ODA and Canadians in development and peace building projects, the East Timorese urge Canada to take immediate action to stem the growing instability and suffering in the region.

An outside intervention for a cease-fire followed by disarmament, perhaps coordinated by Canada, is perceived as absolutely necessary to prevent a looming civil war and to ensure at least limited level of security for the East-Timorese people.

The history of good relations between the Canadian and Indonesian governments bodes well for Canada to undertake such a role. The activists also expressed a desire for Canada to continue to assist the East Timorese beyond the short term horizon. Arnaldo Mira, the former Vice-rector of the University of Timor, appealed for Canadian assistance in launching a gradual process of reconstruction. The message was pointedly summed up by Manuel Abrantes of Bishop Belo's Peace and Justice Commission, the East Timorese are asking Canadians for help, hoping for a short term leadership and a long term ally.

Ken Baskin, the Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, also contributed to painting a picture of the troubled region. He stressed the importance of Canada as an ODA donor in East Timor. Furthermore, he commented that Indonesia is unlikely to fund reconstruction of the region and pointed out that East Timor is being unfairly burdened by the Indonesian government. He drew attention to

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REPORT ON EAST TIMOR ROUNDTABLE

Ottawa, February 22, 1999

I. BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR

The current situation in East Timor (as described by four East Timorese guests) can be characterised as extremely serious and fluid. According to Florentino Sarmento of the Komnas Ham, clashes between proponents of independence and those supporting integration are exacerbated by additional cleavages within the East Timorese society that have developed as a result of the long standing conflict between the East Timorese and the Indonesian government. Indeed, a "cycle of revenge" feeds ever increasing incidents of violence, especially among youth. Wide-spread lawlessness has come to characterise every-day life of the East Timorese. The Indonesian military is arming the pro-integration forces and civilians take up weapons, either in desperation or for monetary gain. A "culture of violence" spreads resulting in an increase in gross human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrest, detention, arbitrary execution, disappearances, torture, rape, sexual abuse, intimidation, and the removal of citizens from their residences. Teachers, nurses, doctors, midwives, and other essential personnel have already begun to leave troubled areas as the wave of violence intensifies, leading to a societal disintegration.

Notwithstanding past and present efforts of the Canadian government, including ODA, and Canadians in development and peace building projects, the East Timorese urged Canada to take immediate action to stem the growing instability and suffering in the region.

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The history of good relations between the Canadian and Indonesian governments bodes well for Canada to undertake such a role. The activists also expressed a desire for Canada to continue to assist the East Timorese beyond the short time horizon. Armido Maia, the former Vice-rector of the University of Timor, appealed for Canadian assistance in launching a genuine process of reconciliation. The message was pointedly summed up by Manuel Abrantes of Bishop Belo's Peace and Justice Commission, the East Timorese are asking Canadians for help, hoping for a short term leadership and a long term friendship.

Ken Sandquist, the Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, also contributed to painting a picture of the troubled region. He stressed the importance of Canada as an ODA donor in East Timor. Furthermore, he contended that Indonesia is unlikely to fund autonomy if separation is the ultimate goal and pointed out that East Timor is increasingly perceived as a burden by the Indonesian government. He drew attention to

the position of Portugal and Australia towards the recent developments and suggested that the Portuguese government would most likely not support the autonomy option unless the East Timorese have a decisive say in determining their own destiny. Meanwhile, the Australian government tends to favor autonomy based on past political and diplomatic contexts. The Ambassador also discussed the important role of the Church -- the most trusted institution in East Timor and the rising fears of civil war within society due to wide-spread uncertainty. In conclusion of his presentation, he put forth the following principles Canada should take into consideration: 1) support for negotiations at the UN, 2) immediate cease-fire, 3) de-militarisation, and 4) continued funding. While he expressed optimism about the success of political solutions, the Ambassador was concerned about changing the ascending "culture of violence" within the East Timorese society.

II. IMMEDIATE PLAN FOR ACTION

The round-table participants forged a consensus on the *immediate* necessity of an outside presence in East Timor to stem possible civil war and enhance security of the East Timorese. A two months window for action was identified. In addition it was agreed that Canada should take a leading role in this processes based on: Canada's good relations with the Indonesian government, Minister Axworthy's interest in the region, Canada's membership on the Security Council, and active involvement of the Canadian government and NGOs in East Timor development efforts. This role could be played either through:

- UN Security Council
- Foreign Ministers' Friends of East Timor Group
- Canada's own initiatives.

It was suggested that Canada use its seat on the Security Council to flag the possibility of civil war and press the Council to take immediate action to prevent escalation of the conflict and maintain peace and security in East Timor. Here, lessons from Rwanda should be drawn upon to generate political will and mobilise UN resources. While this was fully endorsed, some participants raised the issue that a placement of UN peace-keeping troops could prove unacceptable to the Indonesian government at least until a final decision about the future of East Timor is made. Reflecting on the experience of Haiti with UN peace-keeping troops, others pointed out the danger of perceiving UN forces as a neo-colonial invasion. Some participants, suggested that other opportunities have to be explored.

Given the contentious nature of this path of action as well as the difficulty of forging an all inclusive international consensus, it was proposed that Canada takes a lead in the context of a **Foreign Ministers' Friends of East Timor Group**. This group could either compliment or be independent of the UN process. It could act as a contact and an action group, flexible enough to function as an early warning mechanism and ready to react expeditiously to fast changing circumstances. It could be precisely this group that initiates international activity. More specifically this Group could:

- a) exert pressure on the Indonesian government to allow an outside presence in the area and participate in other processes aimed at stabilisation of East Timor,
- b) **press for an immediate cease-fire and follow-up disarmament and demilitarisation (this step should include efforts to prevent increased arming of the para-military by the Indonesian army), the participants recognised this point to be the *sine qua non* of any further action**
- c) after the situation has been stabilised, start planning and thinking about the medium and long term needs of the East Timorese.

Other potential member countries of the Ministers' Group included: Australia, United States, Japan, Great Britain, Portugal, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Ireland, Thailand, South East Asia, Chile, Brazil as well as the UN.

Third, in addition and/or in case the creation of the Foreign Ministers' Friends of East Timor Group is hindered and the UN is slow to react for one reason or other, **Canada should undertake its own initiatives** on activities outlined in points a), b), and c).

III. MEDIUM AND LONG TERM VISION

In the medium and long term Canada, either on its own or in the context of a Minister's Friends of East Timor Group and/or the UN could help the East Timorese in the following areas:

- * **Coordinate donor countries, IFIs, and foreign NGO activities** to avoid duplication and redundant demands for assessment studies. Once again Canada could take steps towards this goal with, perhaps, CIDA playing a role.
- * **Support the reconciliation initiatives by providing Canadian experience in negotiations and mediation in conflict.** Canada could take lead in supporting dialogue within East Timor society by providing training in mediation and negotiation, setting up mechanisms that would prevent violent action-reaction dynamics.
- * **Support reconciliation by facilitating compensation and due justice processes for victims of war crimes.** Florentino Sarmiento noted there has been no process whereby perpetrators of crimes were brought to justice and victims compensated. He expressed doubts about the viability of reconciliation without steps towards addressing this situation. Since solidarity of the East Timorese people has been broken a need for an accommodative "neutral" Council to deal with transition is in order. The necessity and difficulty of disarming para-militaries and re-integrating militant personnel back into the society was pointed out..
- * **Initiate action to address psycho-social and physical trauma experienced especially by children in conflict areas.** Experiences with such initiatives in Nigeria and Rwanda would be particularly instructive. Such initiatives could potentially contribute to the development of culture of cooperation and communication based on tolerance.
- * **Helping to strengthen East Timorese civil society to undertake domestic peace and institution building.** To enable a genuine transformation of East Timorese institutions for the East Timorese, there is a need for capacity building. David Rhody from CARE Canada

presented some of the initiatives now under way in East Timor such as training indigenous staff to administer CARE programmes in agriculture, sanitation and clean water. Jacques Bertrand of University of Toronto expressed concern about the imminent institutional vacuum that is to come on the heels of escalating conflict or Indonesian withdrawal, capacity building initiatives should address this problem immediately. According to Norm MacDonnel from CIDA, supporting activities such as the use of media and grass roots discussions could help to develop a culture of tolerance and prepare the way for democracy. Furthermore, initiatives supporting the planning and strengthening of East Timorese provincial government were briefly addressed.

*** Helping to strengthen East Timorese NGO networks and state-NGO partnership.**

Antonio Conceicao, CARE officer in Dili, expressed the necessity of coordinating local NGOs, perhaps by working with a Forum of NGOs in East Timor, in order to take better advantage of outside assistance. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of grassroots initiatives and the developing links between leaders and society (to build trust).

IV. CONCLUSION

The participants concluded by stressing the grave nature of the current situation in East Timor. **They stressed the clear danger of civil war if no action is taken.** Some outside presence is absolutely necessary to stem imminent civil war and enhance the personal security of the East Timorese people. The identified channels of action were the Security Council, Foreign Ministers' Friends of East Timor Group, Canada's own initiatives or a combination of the three. While immediate intervention aimed at a cease-fire and disarmament is the sine qua non of all further initiatives, thinking should start about how to approach medium and long term reconciliation and development needs of the East Timorese.

List of Participants

Dr. Jacques Bertrand, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto

Thérèse Bouchard, Director for Human Rights and Democracy (Conflict Management)
Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale

Sharon Scharfe, Parliamentarians for East Timor

Colin Stewart, One World Partnership

Louise Chernetz, ETAN, CAWG mission to East Timor, and Anglican Church of Canada,
Winnipeg

Maggie Helwig, Canada Action for Indonesia and East Timor

David Rhody/Hong-Won Yu, CARE Canada

Susan Fisher, Unitarian Service Committee (USC) Canada

Debby Cote, Central American Peacebuilding, CUSO

Warren Allmand, General Director
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development

Dr. Steven Baranyi, Senior Program Officer, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program,
IDRC

Harbey Goldberg, Deputy Director, Canadian Human Rights Commission

Jess Agustin, Canadian Catholic Organisation for Development and Peace,

Bern Jagunos, Anglican Primate World Relief Organisation (until recently with Canada-Asia
Working Group)

Kathryn Robertson, Canada-Asia Working Group

Kerry Pither, National Office, ETAN

Isabel da Costa Galhas, National Council of Timorese Resistant

East Timorese

Antonio Conceicao, CARE officer in Dili

Manuel Abrantes, Bishop Belo's Peace and Justice Commission

Armindo Maia, former Vice-Rector, University of Timor

Florentino Sarmiento, Komnas Ham representative in Dili

Government

Ingrid Hall, Director General, South and Southeast Asia Bureau, DFAIT

Sarah Taylor, Deputy Director, Southeast Asia Division, DFAIT

Ted Langtry, Director General, Indonesia, Philippines and South Pacific Program, CIDA

Jennifer Moher, Peacebuilding and Human Security Division, DFAIT

Christine Hodge, Peacebuilding Unit, CIDA

Jorge Rodriguez Elizalde, Program Manager, Indonesia, Philippines and South Pacific Program, CIDA

Chriss Hull, Southeast Asia Division, DFAIT

Lajos Àrendas, Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and International Women's Equality Division, DFAIT

Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

Steve Lee, National Director

Representatives from the Canadian Embassy in Jakarta

Ken Sunquist, Ambassador

Norm MacDonnell, CIDA



125 Sussex Dr. Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

East Timor Roundtable

Monday, February 22, 1999
Government Conference Centre
Colonel By Room
2 Rideau Street
Ottawa

- 8:45-9:00 Coffee
- 9:00-9:10 Welcome Steve Lee,
National Director Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development
- 9:10-9:20 Roundtable Introductions
- 9:20-9:30 Welcome Ingrid Hall
Director General, South and Southeast Asia Bureau
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
- 9:30-10:15 Capacity Building and Peacebuilding Needs
East Timor Guests
- 10:15-11:00 Situation update
Ken Sundquist
Canada's Ambassador to Indonesia
- 11:00-11:15 Break
- 11:15-12:30 Discussion
- 12:30-13:30 Lunch
- 13:30-15:00 Discussion
- 15:00-15:15 Break
- 15:15-16:30 Policy options
- 16:30-17:00 Conclusion wrap-up

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