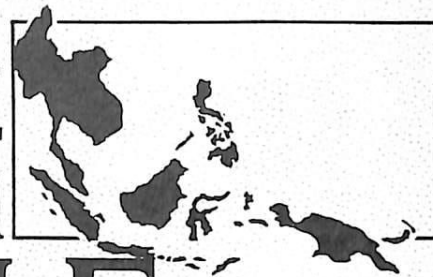


# southeast asia CHRONICLE



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## SUCCESSION CRISIS IN INDONESIA **A DICTATORSHIP SELF-DESTRUCTS**



**U.S. Pilots Bombing E. Timor?**  
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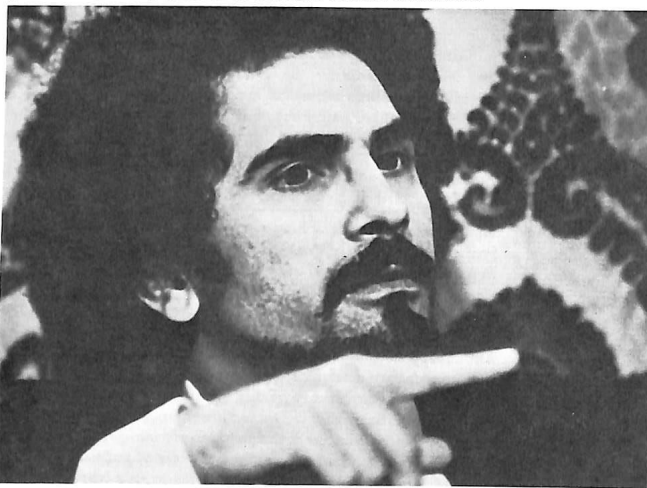


photo: Frits N. Eisenloeffel

## WHY FRETILIN KEEPS ON FIGHTING

Timor is escalating rapidly. Students demonstrating against him in December 1977 added their objections to the Timor campaign to their protests against government corruption.

To most outsiders, East Timor—and Fretilin—appear as tragic victims. Yet it is important to examine the reasons Fretilin has been able to hold out so long, fighting the Indonesian military to a stalemate.

Jose Ramos-Horta, Fretilin's ambassador to the United Nations, explains the phenomenon in both physical and political terms. Pointing out that most of East Timor is mountains, Ramos-Horta adds that there are few passable roads and that most of the people live in isolated villages. The capital city of Dili at its peak contained 30,000 inhabitants, and the "urban centers," which Fretilin acknowledges are controlled by the Indonesians, consist of a half-dozen houses where the Portuguese once maintained police posts. Indonesian troops, who do not speak the language of East Timor and are not familiar with its terrain, face a hostile population. Fretilin has won the loyalty of most East Timorese by an energetic campaign to bring education, health care and improved food production to a people whose former colonial masters had left 95 percent of them illiterate. In Ramos-Horta's words, "When we talk about armed struggle we inevitably have to talk about schools, health centers, and food production, because these things are linked. There cannot be a successful military campaign without a parallel campaign in literacy, political education, health and food production." Since the Portuguese did not seriously reorganize East Timor's subsistence economy, the self-reliance forced by Indonesia's blockade of the island is nothing new, according to Ramos-Horta.

Fretilin leaders, who broadcast despairing calls for help as the Indonesians launched their first wave of slaughter against the residents of Dili, now speak confidently of ultimate victory. In a

The million inhabitants of tiny East Timor have driven deep wedges into the Suharto coalition. Despite official Indonesian claims to have transformed the former Portuguese colony into a peaceful province, the Democratic Republic of East Timor still exists two-and-a-half years after a full-scale Indonesian invasion of its territory began. From the highest levels of government to the villages of Java, the ongoing war generates dissatisfaction and anger. The two sides seemed so unevenly matched that it was no surprise to learn that between 60,000 and 100,000 East Timorese—10 percent of the population—have been killed in a war in which the invader uses airplanes, tanks and naval bombardment in addition to tens of thousands of well-armed infantry troops against a nation of peasants. Indonesian forces have also imposed an almost unbreakable embargo on the island, successfully preventing outside observers from reporting what is happening there, although the Indonesian government occasionally takes groups of reporters and dignitaries on carefully controlled one- or two-day visits.

The Indonesian attack on East Timor was motivated by fear of Fretilin, the Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor. Fretilin is committed to a program of national independence, social and economic equality, and international non-alignment. With the decline of Portuguese colonial power in

1974, Fretilin emerged as the strongest and most popular of the three political groupings competing for control of the soon-to-be independent state. For the Indonesian government, the ascendancy of Fretilin was alarming on two counts: (1) East Timor governed by Fretilin appeared as a potential "Cuba on our doorstep," a progressive center within the military-ruled Indonesian archipelago; (2) if Fretilin were successful in leading East Timor to independence, the example might encourage revolts on other islands whose people were not happy with rule from Jakarta. The United States government, with a general interest in Indonesian stability and a military interest in preserving submarine access to the deep-water Ombai-Wetar straits just north of Timor, tacitly supported Suharto's plans to force East Timor to join Indonesia.

Indonesian strategists expected to "pacify" East Timor in a few days. Yet two weeks after the initial invasion by 10,000 troops, they were forced to send another 15,000 men. Two-and-a-half years later, the war continues. Fretilin is believed to control two-thirds of the land area of East Timor and upwards of 80 percent of the population. Indonesian hospitals and cemeteries are reported to be crowded with casualties from a war that is seldom acknowledged in public. As more and more people feel its effects and as it becomes clear that sheer military force will not destroy Fretilin, the cost to Suharto of the effort to subjugate East

speech on May 20, 1978, Nicolau Lobato, president of Fretilin's Central Committee and president of the Democratic Republic of East Timor, expressed the new mood. Lobato's speech marked the fourth anniversary of the founding of Fretilin:

"... Above all, they were four years of political development, four years of struggle. And in these four short years, the people of East Timor have taken a great step forward, from four centuries of colonial domination, to revolution. Four years and four centuries.

"A great step, in fact, made possible by Fretilin forging Timorese national consciousness, for the people to emerge from four centuries of colonial darkness, to wage a stubborn, heroic and victorious armed struggle against the shameful aggression of the Indonesian colonial expansionists and courageously advance on the revolutionary road.

"That that could happen is enough to show the world our resolute wish to freely live our identity as East Timorese, our unmistakable national consciousness, our deepest repudiation of imperialism and all forms of domination and exploitation of man by man. . . .

"It is about nine months since the enemy launched its first big campaign of encirclement and annihilation, a campaign worthy of respect.

"However, despite the impressive size of this campaign, full of the noise of the machines of war, this campaign is irremediably sinking in the frontier regions. The determination and initiative of the masses in the two frontier sectors are offering such resistance that the bloody-handed murdering Indonesian generals thought impossible . . . we believe the frustrated and exhausted Jakarta generals should recognize they have lost the war; . . .

"The experience of other revolutionary peoples, as well as our own experience, shows that the enemy will never be convinced by reason. After this failed campaign it will try another and so on, to its complete defeat . . . the enemy must be defeated before it will be convinced. . . .

"We now fight with half victory won, because we are certain of our victory. For that reason we say: 'Victory is certain' . . .

"I think that Senhores Jakarta generals should understand that East Timor is not a colony of Indonesia, and will never be a neo-colony. First, because Indonesia does not have the economic capacity to maintain neo-colonies. Second, because that is certainly not what we are fighting for. . . .

"With all our strength, we proclaim loud and clear: our struggle continues and victory is certain!" □

## American Pilots in East Timor?

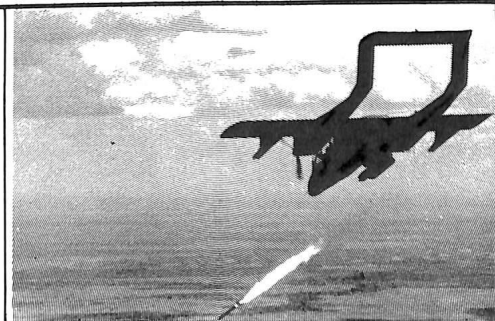
American pilots and military advisers have joined the attack on East Timor, according to Fretilin sources. In a June 20 broadcast, Fretilin Information Secretary Alarico Fernandes charged that "American pilots are flying Bronco OV-10 ground attack craft for the Indonesian Air Force in East Timor."

Elaborating on the charges, Fretilin's Ambassador to the United Nations Jose Ramos-Horta said on July 12 that two American military advisers have been stationed in Dili since last December and that more had arrived during the first three months of this year. Although the State Department has admitted that 90 percent of the weapons used by Indonesian troops in East Timor are supplied by the U.S., this is the first time American combat personnel have been reported to be taking part in the fighting. The State Department denies Fretilin charges, but a spokesperson said "there have been American visits to East Timor."

The Fretilin reports cannot yet be confirmed from independent sources, since the Indonesian blockade of East Timor prevents outside observers from investigating the situation there. However, the fact that such charges have not been made before suggests that their appearance now must be taken very seriously as a warning that U.S. involvement in the war against East Timor may be much greater than many Americans believe.

In a letter to U.S. Ambassador to the United States Andrew Young, Fretilin Ambassador Ramos-Horta recalled his country's initial encouragement at Jimmy Carter's campaign "commitments to human rights and promises to cease U.S. support to repressive regimes such as Indonesia's." Carter's subsequent support for increased military assistance to Indonesia, he said, "disheartened" Fretilin.

"We believe that President Carter is still committed to his campaign promises," the letter continues, "and we understand his difficulties in dealing with problems of a small country like ours. However, we may remind him that in East Timor many hundreds of children of the age of his daughter Amy have already been killed and hundreds more will be killed in the next few weeks and months as a result of direct American intervention there. For this reason we trust you, Mr. Ambassador, to bring this question to the attention of the President of the United States." □



## The Bronco workhorse: Ask Thailand about it.

Or Venezuela or West Germany or Indonesia or the U.S. Marines, Navy and Air Force. Their reasons for choosing Bronco are numerous, but center around this: it's a real workhorse. The Royal Thai Air Force, for example, accumulated over 11,000 flight hours on its OV-10C's in its first two years of operation. About 5,000 hours were counter-insurgency missions of various types using mixed ordnance including suppression attacks on terrorist camps and mountain fortified positions, escorting ground troops through terrorist territory, patrol paradrops, reconnaissance and rescue helicopter support. With as many as five separate tasks conducted on a single flight Bronco's Combat Ready Rate during this time was a remarkable 90%. Testimony to its simple, reliable design and its ability to stand up to rugged terrain, torrential rains, very high temperatures and humidity, sand and gravel operating surfaces and battle damage.

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Over 870,000 flight hours of worldwide operation have proven that Bronco can fly many different missions. At operating costs that won't work a strain on any country's budget.

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