

THE MISSING PEACE

NEWSLETTER OF THE EAST TIMOR TALKS CAMPAIGN

124 Napier Street, Fitzroy, 3065, Australia Tel: (03) 417 7505 Fax: (03) 416 2746 No. 1 March, 1992

The talks campaign

The East Timor Talks Campaign is a new bid to resolve the conflict in East Timor through dialogue under UN auspices.

The campaign was initiated in Australia in 1991 following an offer by the East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao, 'to discuss any project for a solution' and a request that Australia facilitate such discussions through the UN. The proposal is supported by Bishop Belo, the head of the Catholic Church in East Timor.

The Santa Cruz massacre forcefully demonstrated the existence of deep-seated conflict in East Timor. Sixteen years after Indonesia's takeover, the East Timorese are clearly not reconciled to integration. Equally, Indonesia is determined to crush all resistance.

The talks proposal is intended to break this impasse. It offers a genuine alternative to continued conflict and violence. It properly recognises the East Timorese people's right to self-determination but also acknowledges Indonesia's concerns and interests. It proposes that all parties to the conflict - Indonesia, Portugal, the East Timorese people (including the resistance) - undertake roundtable negotiations without preconditions, under UN auspices.

Conflict-resolution through dialogue is being widely applied to many long-running issues. For its part, Australia is actively promoting peace talks on other regional issues such as Tibet, Cambodia and Bougainville.

East Timor remains the missing piece.

Why Canberra should back talks

On 7 February, **DAVID SCOTT** presented the case for talks on East Timor to the Federal Parliamentary Committee looking at Australia's relations with Indonesia.

Australia's policy of appeasement of Indonesia since 1975 assumed an eventual peaceful integration of East Timor into Indonesia, Mr Scott told the committee. The Santa Cruz massacre demonstrated it had failed.

The failure of the policy of appeasement is due to its internal contradiction. The willingness to accede to Indonesia's wishes leaves the East Timor issue unresolved and that issue is the major obstacle to close relations.

Mr Scott criticised supporters of the policy such as Professors Arndt and Mackie and Greg Sheridan of *The Australian*. 'Not one has anything to say about a resolution of the East Timor issue', he said.

Australia now has the opportunity to play a useful role in facilitating what is the first step towards the settlement of any dispute; talks between the parties.

Mr Scott examined reasons that could possibly be given to oppose talks.

The first is that the dispute could be seen as an internal matter. However, said Mr Scott, 'the issue is obviously an international concern'. And even if it was not seen as such by the UN and a range of governments, it would still merit mediation on human rights grounds in the same way as apartheid in South Africa or the UN facilitated settlement of the 12 year civil war in El Salvador.

Appeasement of Jakarta leaves the East Timor issue unresolved and that issue is the major obstacle to close relations

A second reason for opposing talks might be that there is no dispute. This is patently unsustainable. Most observers agree that the overwhelming majority of East Timorese strongly reject integration with Indonesia, though they may choose not to resist militarily.

A third reason against talks might be that an agreement to talk could lead to other regions in Indonesia pressing for talks or special status. East Timor, Mr Scott told the MPs, 'is a special case'. It was not part of the Dutch East Indies and fell outside the convention that the boundary of a colony becomes the boundary of the new nation. Further, he said, Indonesia could agree to talks without relinquishing its claim to sovereignty but recognising a dispute exists that has international implications and therefore need not create an internal precedent.

A fourth argument against talks is that the East Timorese have benefitted from Indonesia's administration and it would not be to their advantage to change the status of East Timor. The East Timorese, said Mr Scott, acknowledge some material benefits provided by Indonesia. The real issue is that Portugal's oppressive colonial rule has been replaced by oppressive colonial rule by another power, Indonesia.

A new version of 'it is in their own interests' is Professor Mackie's view that civil war would break out if Indonesia withdrew from East Timor. Mr Scott denied

The East Timor Talks Campaign is endorsed by: Australian Council for Overseas Aid; Bob Brown; Sr Veronica Brady; Hon John Dowd, QC; Martin Ferguson; Tom Uren; Bill Armstrong; Dr Keith Suter; Janet Powell; Rev Dr Sandy Yule; Phillip Adams; Jo Vallentine; James Dunn; Justice Marcus Einfeld; Prof Peter Singer; Heather Southcott, AM; Fr Bob Maguire, AM; Dr Joe Camilleri; Sr Angela Ryan; Judith Wright; David Scott; Bishop Paul Moore Jr; John Wheeldon; Dr Jocelyne Scutt; Frank Brennan, SJ; Hon Michael Kirby; Bob Debus; Russell Rollason; David Suzuki; Justice Elizabeth Evatt, AO; Noam Chomsky; Thomas Keneally; Stella Cornelius, AO OBE; Timothy Mo; Rodney Hall; Elsa Atkin; Rev Richard Wootton; Prof Garth Nettheim; Dr Ross Fitzgerald; Kaz Cooke; Rev Dorothy McMahon; Bill Ethell; David Shinnick; Senator John Coulter; Dr David Armstrong; Dr Hilary Charlesworth; Dr Judy Henderson; Prof Charles Birch; Faith Bandler; Tom Kelly; Mollie Missen; Bishop Brian Kyme; Sr Janet Mead; Dr Richard Tanter; Michael Sullivan OAM. Views in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Campaign endorsers.

this would happen and said it was an implausible defence of Indonesian military occupation. 'It is also irrelevant. The issue is self-determination', said Mr Scott.

Outcomes

A fifth reason for reluctance to support talks might be that nothing would come out of them. Mr Scott said it was important to recognise that two of the parties to the conflict, Portugal and the East Timorese, were committed to making talks work. Indonesia would win wide international support and certainly the support of sections of Indonesian society, even if they are unable to express their support at this stage.

'The negotiating road is narrow, slow and uncertain as the Middle East demonstrates', said Mr Scott. Short of early withdrawal by Indonesian forces 'which would clearly not occur', Mr Scott told the Committee a number of possibilities could emerge from talks on East Timor. 'The act of meeting itself transforms any dispute', he said.

Possibilities that might emerge from talks 'include agreements about relaxed administration, human rights, a moratorium on armed action by either side in exchange for a reduction in troop numbers'.

'Free elections and greater power to regional government.... might be considered. Arrangements for greater autonomy similar to the proposals being considered for the West Bank and Gaza Strip are other possibilities. They do not satisfy the Palestinians but may be seen to be a step in the direction of greater freedom'.

Australia can play a useful role in facilitating what is the first step towards the settlement of any dispute: talks between the parties

'Agreement to an enhanced UN presence in health care, education and agricultural development would open East Timor to outside ideas and people could relax tensions'.

Beyond that there are possibilities that could lead to partial or full self-determination, a goal that the East Timorese are unlikely to relinquish, said Mr Scott.

'If talks are held and there is no progress or imperceptible progress, what would have been lost? The answer is nothing'.

'Without talks the impasse will continue', said Mr Scott. 'Indonesia has clearly failed to suppress East Timorese aspirations. On the other hand, East Timorese leaders know they cannot win the day through military force. The cycle of small and possibly large scale action and reaction and loss of life and suffering will continue indefinitely'.

'The tragic Santa Cruz massacre, world reaction to it and renewed concern among Australians about East Timor, provide Australia with one more chance to quietly and diplomatically work for talks without pre-conditions,

a policy that is principled and in Australia's immediate and long-term interests'.

David Scott was in East Timor a few days prior to the Indonesian invasion of 7 December 1975, as a representative of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid. He subsequently assisted in presenting the East Timorese position to the UN Security Council and General Assembly. He is a member of the Australia East Timor Association and the East Timor Talks Committee, and a former Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Community Aid Abroad. He is Commissioner for the Environment in Victoria, Chairman of the Land Conservation Council and a Commissioner of SECV.

Portugal urges talks

At a meeting with the new UN Secretary-General, Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on 24 January 1992, the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Joao de Deus Pinheiro, declared Portugal's 'immediate availability' to participate in talks involving Indonesia and the East Timorese people under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General.

Portugal stressed the central role of both the UN and representatives of the East Timorese people in the process.

Portugal proposed that the discussions proceed at the diplomatic level, mediated by a person of internationally recognised and respected experience, accepted by the Parties to be designated by the UN Secretary-General.

The Foreign Minister recalled a declaration adopted by the 12 member states of the European Community on 3 December 1991. The 12 expressed their support for a solution that is 'just, global and internationally acceptable, according to the principles of the UN Charter... and that fully respects the legitimate interests and aspirations of the people of East Timor'.

Suharto: we never wanted East Timor

Indonesia's President Suharto has said his country never wanted East Timor and had only accepted control there to help the local people.

He told an academic foundation in Jakarta that Indonesia took control to help the people achieve independence, an executive of the foundation, Mr Mohammad Isnaeni, said.

President Suharto said governing the province was actually a burden. Millions of dollars for development have been poured into East Timor since 1976.

President Suharto told the members of the 17.8.45 Foundation, named after the country's independence date, that because East Timor had not been part of the Dutch East Indies, Indonesia had never sought control in the way it had in Irian Jaya.

The Age, 18 February 1992

Solidarity groups to campaign on talks

A meeting of solidarity groups from 13 countries held in Geneva, 14-16 February, strongly endorsed peace talks on East Timor.

The meeting resolved that promoting the peace talks campaign internationally and securing the release

of East Timorese political prisoners would be the top priorities for 1992.

Participants from Indonesia, Australia, Japan, Canada, the United States, Belgium, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden and the United Kingdom attended.

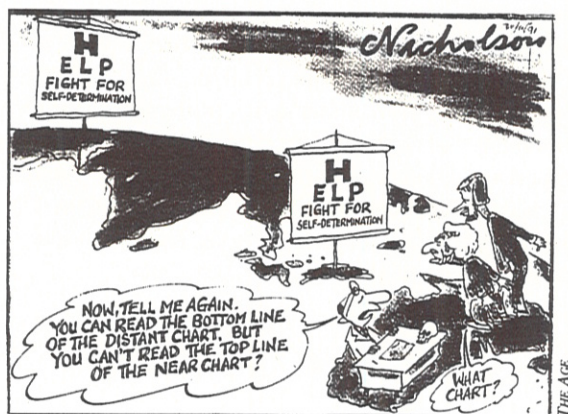
UN body calls for just settlement

In a consensus statement announced in Geneva on 4 March, the UN Commission on Human Rights expressed its support for a settlement of the East Timor question.

'The Commission', reads the statement, 'encourages the Secretary-General to continue his good offices for achieving a just, comprehensive, and internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor'.

The Commission 'strongly deplored' the Santa Cruz killings, and urged 'the Indonesian government to bring to trial and punish all those found responsible'.

The Commission also called on Indonesia to give a 'fair trial' to civilians arrested on that occasion and 'to release without delay those not involved in violent activities'.



UN expert: torture routine in Indonesia

The UN's expert on torture, Mr Pieter Kooijmans, visited Indonesia and East Timor last November to report on the use of torture and other cruel practices.

In his report to the Geneva-based UN Commission on Human Rights, 8 January 1992, Kooijmans concluded that torture is practised routinely in Indonesia, particularly in Aceh, East Timor and Irian Jaya.

The report contains some important recommendations. These include:

1. Indonesia should endorse the International Political and Economic Covenants and ratify the Convention against Torture.
2. The independence of the judiciary should be respected and the judiciary should be more protective of human rights.
3. An arrested person's right to a lawyer, which is guaranteed by Indonesian law, must be respected.
4. All evidence not collected in conformity with the law should be dismissed in court.
5. The Anti-Subversion Law should be repealed.
6. A national commission on human rights should

be established which, inter alia, could receive complaints of torture and investigate such complaints.

7. Officials guilty of torture should be severely punished.

8. Jurisdiction over offences committed by the military and police should be given to the civilian courts.

Indonesian agencies urge dialogue

In a statement released to the media on 29 November 1991, a group of Indonesian NGOs called for dialogue on East Timor, the establishment of an independent human rights commission in Indonesia and for foreign aid to promote human rights in Indonesia.

The group belongs to INGI, a forum comprising some 100 Indonesian and overseas development agencies whose principal objective is to promote human rights in Indonesia through development.

Referring to the Dili massacre, the group said 'acts of violence which claim such a heavy toll materially, spiritually and in terms of human life, directly reflect an insufficient level of dialogue with the people which (if carried out satisfactorily) would accommodate their initiative and aspirations and result in a climate of mutual security and mutual respect'.

The agencies urged 'that all acts of violence be stopped and that dialogue or other peaceful means be found to resolve the problems in East Timor, because ultimately acts of violence beget new violence and lead to a culture of violence'.

Infight statement

The Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights (Infight) has strongly urged the abandonment of 'the security approach' by the Indonesian government.

In a statement on the Dili massacre, released on Human Rights Day, 10 December 1991, the organisation said 'the lesson of the Dili incident, with all the events that preceded and followed from it, is that we should abandon the era of armed force in favour of a politics which guarantees the genuine implementation of civil rights'.

New publication

INDONESIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

This new quarterly newsletter on development and human rights in Indonesia is published by the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (LBH).

Written in English, the October-December issue carries informative reports on freedom of the press, book banings (16 in 1991), the screening of candidates for the June 1992 elections, trials in Aceh, land compensation and worker issues.

Available from: ACFOA Human Rights Office, 124 Napier Street, Fitzroy 3065, Australia.

Rates in Australia (4 issues): Individuals AUD \$15, Institutions AUD \$25

DIARY

20-21 March: Seminar, *Legal Issues Arising from the East Timor Conflict*. University of NSW, Lecture Theatre 5, Central Lecture Block, Tel: 02-697.2267.

24 March: Community Aid Abroad-Freedom From Hunger Campaign meet with Foreign Minister Gareth Evans to present petition and urge support for talks on East Timor.

March: national appeal to trade unionists to support peace talks on East Timor.

5 April: national launch by Martin Ferguson of *East Timor Relief Association*. and new release *East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy* by Mark Aarons and Robert Domm, 2pm, Uniting Hall, Melbourne.

9 April: East Timor Talks Campaign: *public information night*. Uniting Church, 222 Pitt Street, Sydney, Tel: 02-599.2659.

18-19 April: East Timor national conference, Adelaide, Tel: 08-269 6252

Bougainville yes, Timor no

'The difficulty is to get the disparate elements to sit down around the table and negotiate a sensible solution.'

Gareth Evans and the problem of Bougainville, Feb 7 1992.

Tough talk

'[I'm] not as patient as Warouw [and will] come down hard on anyone who steps out of line.'

Brig Gen Theo Syafei, Warouw's replacement as military commander in East Timor. The Age, 11 January 1992

Talks Campaign Meetings

Melbourne

First Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm. 124 Napier Street, Fitzroy, Tel: 03-417 7505.

Sydney

Regular meetings are held in the city. Contact Joan Simpson, Tel: 02-599 2659.

THE TIMORESE UN PROJECT

Ensure that the voice of East Timor continues to be heard in international forums!

If you are between 17 and 22 years of age, and free to travel this year, then join with other young East Timorese in a speaking tour of North America and the UN during December. Applications close March 31 1992. For further information contact: Emilia Pires (03) 302 1896 or the East Timor Talks Campaign (03) 417 7505 or write to Timorese UN Project, PO Box 498, Glenroy VIC 3048.

NEW RELEASE

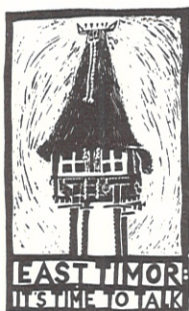
EAST TIMOR: THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATION, Prof Mubyarto et al.

The first independent Indonesian study of the socio-economic situation in East Timor since the 1975 invasion, the report accepts Indonesian incorporation as a given but concludes that integration has been a deeply traumatic and alienating experience.

\$10 per copy (includes post and handling). Order from: IRIP, PO Box 190, Northcote 3070, Australia

This edition of *The Missing Peace* was edited by Adrian Davies, Kirsty Sword and Pat Walsh.

Donations are sought to support this project.



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