

East Timor News Digest #7 - July 1-31 2006

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POLITICAL/SOCIAL CRISIS

Timor asks UN for foreign police force

Australian Associated Press - July 27, 2006

Australian police could be deployed in East Timor for another five years and in greater numbers after the strife-torn country asked the United Nations to set up an 800-strong multinational force.

New Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta said that within two weeks the UN Security Council would consider a request for a bigger-than-expected foreign police force capable of rebuilding and bolster the current deployment.

"We are talking about a five-year commitment, but the Security Council most likely now will start with a two-year mission with more than 800 police that will have a multiple function," he said ahead of a regional security summit in Kuala Lumpur.

"It will do regular policing and will do training in many fields, not only operational matters, but also police administration, police management."

East Timor's own 1,000-strong police force is in disarray after it clashed with parts of the rival army in May, plunging Timor into weeks of fighting between security factions and ethnic gangs.

On Thursday, Ramos Horta said the police force had grown too fast and had been poorly trained.

Many members of the force has fled the violence, which left 30 people dead and tens of thousands homeless in makeshift tent camps after former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri sacked hundreds of disgruntled soldiers.

In the worst atrocity of the unrest, Timorese soldiers turned their guns on police, massacring 12 officers outside police headquarters in Dili on May 25.

Ramos Horta said he had talked to both Thailand and the Philippines about a police contribution, although it was too early to say what shape the UN presence would take.

"It must not be guided only by cost-cutting calculations," he said. "Nation-building is a long-term process."

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer admitted it would be difficult to assemble an 800-strong police force for East Timor.

That could mean a fresh request for more police from Australia and New Zealand, adding to around 250 already on the ground.

"Eight hundred is a very big number. I wouldn't like to put a figure on it, but I think the focus in terms of providing security for East Timor is going to have to be more on police than the military," Mr Downer said. "It's extremely hard to get police forces around the world to provide support to international police operations and UN police operations for

reasons being that police are pretty much committed on the ground in the individual members states."

Mr Downer said East Timor's police force had been dysfunctional and it would take time to rebuild and organise.

Downer flags significant Timor troop withdrawal

Reuters - July 26, 2006

Australia will cut its peacekeeping troops in East Timor by the end of this year, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer announced today, signalling that tension is easing in the troubled state.

But the Federal Government is still undecided over whether to deploy policemen under a UN mandate to keep peace in the country, he told reporters on the sidelines of a global security conference.

Australia is leading a 2,500-strong international peacekeeping force, which also includes troops from Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal, that was brought in to restore peace in the tiny country, Asia's newest state.

"Certainly with 1,300, we certainly have more than we believe we are likely to need over the next six months," Mr Downer said. "At this stage, the expectation is we will be reducing the number and reducing it quite significantly by the end of the year," he said.

East Timor plunged into political crisis nearly three months ago when former prime minister Mari Alkatiri dismissed around 600 soldiers, mostly from the country's west, after they protested against discrimination.

UN secretary general Kofi Annan has said he hoped UN-led police and troops could join the Australian-led troops in six months and eventually take over the peacekeeping operation. Mr Downer said Australia had not yet decided whether to contribute to the UN force.

Australia's peacekeeping mission is the second

time in recent years the Government has sent troops to restore order in East Timor. Australia led a multi-national force in 1999 following a vote for independence marked by violence blamed largely on pro-Jakarta militia with ties to the Indonesian army.

Lobato retracts admission he armed hit squad

Sydney Morning Herald - July 26, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch — East Timor's former interior minister, Rogerio Lobato, twice admitted during closed court hearings that he armed civilian Timorese so they could murder enemies of the ruling Fretilin party, court monitors have revealed.

Lobato admitted guilt when confronted with the allegation during hearings in Dili on June 22 and July 1, the Judicial System Monitoring Program said.

But five days after the July 1 hearing, Lobato's lawyers reportedly prepared documents denying the allegations and claiming that he was coerced by Australian soldiers into making false declarations in court. A defence spokesman denied the allegations. Lobato was placed under house arrest last month.

The monitoring program, which was set up in 2001 to help build East Timor's judicial system, said that Lobato's three lawyers were in court on July 1 when he agreed with accusations based on the testimony of Vicente da Conceicao, a former guerilla fighter known as "Railos".

In statements presented in court Mr da Conceicao said that Lobato gave him weapons and ordered him to murder political opponents of the ruling Fretilin party, including disgruntled army officers.

He said Lobato was acting with the full knowledge of the now deposed prime minister, Mari Alkatiri, who was questioned by prosecutors last week. Prosecutors have indicated Mr Alkatiri is being

treated as a suspect in the case. Lobato could face up to 15 years in jail if found guilty.

Agence France-Presse reports that East Timorese police who had illegally kept weapons in their homes for protection during the recent weeks of unrest have surrendered more than 50 firearms to Australian peacekeepers.

Timor minister claims rights abuse by Diggers

The Australian - July 21, 2006

Mark Dodd — Lawyers for East Timor's disgraced former interior minister, Rogerio Lobato, have accused Australian soldiers of breaking international human rights laws when they hauled him from his home last month on charges of gun running.

Documents prepared by Mr Lobato's lawyers and seen by The Australian, deny charges that he conspired to arm pro-government civilians to silence critics of the former Alkatiri government.

The documents, dated July 6, underscore Portuguese government claims of Australian interference in the internal affairs of East Timor during the recent political crisis. Mr Lobato's three foreign lawyers — Paulo Remedios, Francisco Nicolau and Mendonca de Freitas — arrived in Dili from Portugal and Macau on June 28, one week after Mr Lobato was arrested at his Dili residence.

They claim Mr Lobato committed no crime and denounced what they described as human rights abuses, including breaches of the Geneva Conventions, committed against him by the Australian military. The Australian Defence Force last night denied the allegations.

But the lawyers' statement said: "Mr Lobato was taken by physical force from his house (under) arrest without any warrant and any explanation by the Australian troops and taken to the Court of Dili which has been occupied by Australian military men. "At the court Mr Lobato was coerced to make declarations under Australian military

vigilance and intimidation."

It also claimed the Australian actions constituted a "violation of international conventions and international criminal procedure". Australian soldiers were accused of mistreating Mr Lobato while he was under arrest by denying him food prepared by his sister after he was arrested.

The ADF spokesman in Dili, Major James Baker, said no formal complaints had been made against the Australian military over its involvement in the Lobato arrest.

"We haven't received any allegations of human rights abuses on this operation," he said. "We would of course work with the authorities in investigating any allegations, were they to be made."

"The (joint taskforce) is already on record in outlining our involvement in the arrest of Mr Lobato, which was limited to providing security for the prosecutor to conduct his duties in safety."

Mr Lobato is accused of arming critics of then prime minister Mari Alkatiri during a surge in unrest earlier this year that forced the deployment of an Australian-led peacekeeping force and ultimately resulted in Dr Alkatiri's resignation last month.

More than 2000 Australian troops and police remain in East Timor but John Howard this week indicated a desire to bring them home as soon as East Timor could manage its own affairs.

Dr Alkatiri was yesterday questioned by the prosecutor-general's office over allegations he authorised the arming of the hit squad given the task of eliminating his rivals. Dr Alkatiri, who did not make any comment to the media, was questioned for about two hours.

The hearing took place amid heavy security. Six tanks were parked on the streets outside and about 20 Australian troops stood guard.

About 50 demonstrators, including opposition party members, rallied outside the office carrying banners and yelling in English: "Alkatiri is a

traitor! Alkatiri is a dictator! Alkatiri is a predator!"

Dili refugee camps considered too good to leave

Sydney Morning Herald - July 20, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch, Dili — Life in Dili's refugee camps isn't too bad. A boy sits on sacks of rice strumming his guitar. Mothers stir pots of boiling food. Men doze blissfully in their families' United Nations-supplied tents.

Trucks bring fresh water twice a day. There are deliveries of high-protein corn, rice, cooking oil and soap.

Mick Slater, the commander of Australia's peacekeeping force in East Timor, thinks that the UN and aid agencies have done "almost too good a job" caring for an estimated 73,000 people who are still sleeping in 33 camps scattered across Dili.

The problem is that the camp residents don't want to go home, even though the violence that caused them to flee their homes has ended after the swearing-in last week of East Timor's new Government. "There would be some people who most definitely feel what is available in the camps is better than they have got in their own homes or communities," Brigadier Slater said yesterday.

Finn Reske-Nielsen, the UN's top refugee official in East Timor, also warned of the risk of creating what he called a "long-term dependency syndrome" in the camps. "In some ways they are better off in the camps," Mr Reske-Nielsen said. "We estimate that it could take until the end of the year before we have a situation where the majority of the internally displaced people have gone home."

Carmalinda Pereira, a mother of eight, says her family has no intention of leaving the grounds of the Catholic Church's Canossian Sisters, where up to 15,000 people have been living since violence began in Dili in April. "We are still too afraid to go to our house," she said. "We don't know what the problems are among Timorese groups but we know

there are still problems."

Guilhermina Marcal, the sister in charge of the camp, said many of the displaced people were "deeply traumatised". "I test them by telling them that they must go home tomorrow and they burst out crying, saying, 'No, no, this is my home now,' especially the children," Sister Guilhermina said.

Representatives of aid agencies say that increasing numbers of people in the camps are leaving to work or even go to their homes during the day but return to the camps to sleep at night. "It will be difficult to get people to leave the camps permanently," Sister Guilhermina said. "They feel safer here."

The UN, aid agencies and international troops in the country have a plan to entice people out of the camps by providing security, food and medical services back in the communities.

Brigadier Slater said the plan would be tested near the suburb of Becora in a few days. "Our troops will be physically located there 24 hours a day," he said.

The UN estimates that there are also 78,000 displaced people outside Dili.

'Substantial' UN police presence needed in restive Timor

Agence France Presse - July 19, 2006

United Nations — UN special envoy Ian Martin on Wednesday stressed the need for a "substantial" UN police presence in volatile East Timor to create the conditions for credible parliamentary and presidential elections next year.

Martin, whom UN chief Kofi Annan sent on a fact-finding tour of the tiny territory on May 31 to help conflicting parties address their grievances, briefed the Security Council on recommendations for a new UN mission that will be detailed in a report due out next month.

"We have not talked numbers yet. It's a matter for

the report," Martin said. But he stressed that the police force "will need to be substantial initially as long as elections place a premium on security."

Asked when the UN force could take over from the Australian-led force currently ensuring security, Martin said the UN could take over responsibility from the very beginning of the mandate of the new mission "on the basis of police elements already there."

He said police elements in the international force — made up of contingents from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal — might be willing "initially at least" to be part of the new UN force.

Around 3,200 foreign peacekeepers, led by Australia, have been patrolling the Timorese capital Dili since May after factional fighting erupted in East Timor's security forces and ethnic gangs began battling on the streets, in violence that left at least 21 people dead.

"It's important that conditions are created for credible parliamentary and presidential elections in early 2007," Martin told reporters, adding that the international community must also recognize that its commitment "has to be a sustained one."

Next month, Annan is to produce a report with recommendations for a new UN mission when the mandate of UNOTIL, the current UN mission in East Timor, expires August 20.

Martin said Timorese leaders were hoping that the UN would take over from the Australian-led international force responsibility "to maintain law and order directly in the short term and work again on the long-term development of Timorese police."

East Timor sank into chaos after Prime Minister Mari Alkatari in April fired 600 soldiers, nearly half the tiny nation's army, following complaints of discrimination because they came from the country's west.

A UN administration and security forces numbering in the thousands ran East Timor after the tiny nation voted for independence from Indonesia in

1999 until 2002. Only a skeleton UN team has remained.

Troops hand Dili's streets over to police

Australian Financial Review - July 20, 2006

Morgan Mellish, Dili — Australian police have taken over patrolling the streets of Dili from the army, in a sign authorities are confident order has been re-established in East Timor's capital.

The head of the international taskforce, Brigadier Mick Slater, said the change was a major step towards shifting the mission from a military operation to a police operation.

He said it would open the way for some of the 2500 troops to be sent back to Australia, although that would not happen immediately. "The soldiers who have been on the streets until now are still held essentially in reserve," he said. "They are a quick response force that can respond if the police need further assistance."

For now, officers from the Australian Federal Police — as well as some from Malaysia and New Zealand — will patrol the streets of Dili from dawn until midnight. Heavily armed soldiers will patrol from midnight until dawn.

If this is successful, the police will take over full-time patrolling in about two weeks. Brigadier Slater cautioned it would be many months before East Timor's police force, which effectively disintegrated during the recent violence, would be able to take over. Former prime minister Mari Alkatiri is scheduled to be questioned today by prosecutors about allegations he authorised the arming of a civilian militia to target his political opponents. Mr Alkatiri denies the allegations.

East Timor's Prosecutor-General, Longuinhos Monteiro, said Mr Alkatiri had been officially named as a suspect and was being compelled to attend the questioning, which could go on for several days. Mr Alkatiri might be detained at the

end of the questioning.

He was ousted last month after several weeks of violence sparked by his decision to sack 600 soldiers. Brigadier Slater said there were concerns Mr Alkatiri's supporters could cause trouble at the hearing and extra security was being put in place.

Many shops and businesses in the capital have reopened, but aid organisations say they are still providing food and other services to about 72,000 people in Dili and 80,000 in the countryside.

During a visit here on Tuesday, Prime Minister John Howard declared Australia's military, which arrived in Dili on May 26, had done its job and the operation would be soon scaled back. The supply vessel HMAS Kanimbla left yesterday for Australia and four out of eight Black Hawk helicopters will leave soon.

East Timor: The people are paying the price

Green Left Weekly - July 19, 2006

Avelino Coelho da Silva, Dili — The conflict that arose recently in Timor Leste has caused more suffering for the nation's poor people, confronting them with an uncertain economic and political future.

This conflict need not have happened if all the country's politicians had put the interests of the people first and not their own desire for power. Their attitudes have resulted in hundreds of thousands of people losing their homes, other possessions or their livelihoods. Now they must live in tents provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

The conflict developed in the first instance around the issue of Loro Sae versus Loron Monu, or east versus west. Yet this ethnic issue has never been a serious problem in this country. During the last few weeks, it has grown so quickly, resulting in the breakdown of the good neighbourly relations that had existed here among East Timorese people

of different ethnicity and religion. This is truly a tragedy! But it has happened.

In the current reality, we see so much irony, as is often the case as history and revolutions unfold. If we read some of the placards and banners that appeared during the recent demonstrations, we might laugh or we might get seriously stressed. For example, there were banners reading "Viva capitalism! Out with the communists!" So our question is; are Timor Leste's politicians that ignorant? Did the people who wrote those banners know what they really wanted?

We can answer here both yes and no. Yes, because those behind the demonstrations were indeed trying to paint former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri [who was pressured to resign on June 26] as a communist — that there was a communist governing the country. And we can answer also "no" because the young people carrying those banners were from poor village and town families that have no familiarity at all with ideas such as capitalism versus communism. It is actually some very non-communist policies — policies with no left character at all — that have created this poorest class of young men and women.

For somebody to be accurately classified as a communist, his/her policies should show some similarity to communist ideas. Yet Alkatiri, and the Fretilin government he has led, have not the slightest communist colouring. The social system that has been fostered is one based on the existence of rich and poor classes. The Alkatiri government has implemented no policies aimed at ending this gap. Worse still, the Alkatiri government's policies have worsened the situation, with the phenomenon of cronyism exacerbating the rich-poor gap. It is a public secret that senior officials have tended to facilitate cronyism.

The economic policies of Alkatiri and Fretilin have tended to promote privatisation. There have been no indications that the Alkatiri government is interested in nationalising any private firms. There have been no signs of a left orientation towards land reform. The gap between rich and poor has grown. Agriculture has been abandoned so that the country as a whole is dominated by trade and by private traders. The peasant farmers have grown poorer under these capitalist policies. You can

see the irony of them carrying banners stating
“Viva capitalism! Down with communism!”

Public utilities such as electricity, telephone, land and air transportation are all controlled by foreign private firms. All the needs of the government are also supplied by private firms, not public companies or cooperatives.

Alkatiri and Fretilin have not organised the people in the way you would expect from a left-wing party. Fretilin has tended to turn itself into a party of the elite, which will mobilise the people from time to time to defend the party's interests, while ignoring the actual interests of the people. Fretilin under Alkatiri has divorced itself from the people and its leaders have adopted the lifestyle of the petty bourgeoisie.

In the cultural field, the Fretilin membership and its cabinet are religious in orientation. They show no signs of wanting to fight against the culture and religion of East Timor. The state radio and television gives more time to religious programming than to political education for the people.

The hostility towards Alkatiri flows from the struggle for power among the elite politicians. Several parties and their leaders are afraid of elections because they know that they cannot defeat Fretilin. At the last local elections, at the suco (village) and aldeia (sub-village) level, Fretilin won 80% of the positions. These results indicate that the country will remain dominated by Fretilin until the people's political consciousness develops further and they decide to support parties based on their political program and ideology and not based on the fictional history of a movement or party.

It was these political factors, supplemented by the interests of neighbouring countries vis-a-vis oil and gas, that the process developed to paint Alkatiri as a “communist”. There was the hope that this could be used to mobilise the masses to defeat Alkatiri and Fretilin at the coming elections.

Another factor contributing to this situation has been Alkatiri's own leadership style. He takes a confrontational approach towards everybody and

appears as arrogant.

What has happened in East Timor is not the case of a left-wing Alkatiri and Fretilin government being forced out of power by mass mobilisations.

Alkatiri fell because he was disliked by some other elite politicians and because Fretilin was not able to bring forward another person capable of being a prime minister and of forming a new government. So some still hope that Fretilin can be destroyed at the next elections. That is what this is about: right-wing against right-wing.

After Alkatiri stepped down from his throne, speculation spread as to who might be his replacement. The newspaper Suara Timor Loro Sae reported that leaders of the various demonstrations started to promote Mario Carrascalao, a leader of the Social Democratic Party. They started to say that Jose Ramos Horta no longer had the support of the people. Why were they saying this?

Initially, it was stated [in a speech by President Xanana Gusmao] that the Fretilin leadership was not legitimate, because the Fretilin congress used a vote by show of hands and not a secret ballot to elect it. Yet negotiations went ahead with the Fretilin leadership and a compromise was reached. Out of this compromise, Horta emerged as the new prime minister. This was the result of a compromise among the political elite. The opposition politicians were outraged and again began to raise criticisms.

The policies outlined by Horta in his swearing-in speech indicate that there will be no substantial changes in policy. Working closely with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank has become a part of the reality here. The promises of building housing, of building an "academic town" and of distributing motorbikes to suco heads fosters false hopes. There are no signs of policies that can take the Timorese people out of their economic misery.

Alkatiri has fallen, but Horta's government is a Fretilin government. The president of Fretilin, Lu'olo, has made it clear that Horta must meet every week with the president and secretary-general of Fretilin and every month with Fretilin's national political commission. Horta

has been steadily distancing himself from the opposition parties. Horta hopes to remain prime minister after the election by gaining Fretilin's support.

Who has won and who has been defeated? The people again are the losers.

[Avelino Coelho da Silva is the secretary-general and national political commissioner of the Socialist Party of Timor.]

Timor presence to be rebalanced: PM

Sydney Morning Herald - July 19, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch, Dili — Australia's military presence in East Timor will be wound back, starting with at least 300 personnel, the Prime Minister, John Howard, announced during a flying visit to the country's violence-ravaged capital Dili. The force, which peaked at more than 3000 in early June, would not be withdrawn "prematurely", he said yesterday.

After driving past camps where tens of thousands of displaced people are still living, Mr Howard said the time had come for the Australian military presence to be "rebalanced".

"We have done our job and been very effective," he said. "Clearly the security situation here has vastly improved on what it was even a month ago, or even a few weeks ago. We can expect over the time ahead for there to be not only some gradual reduction but also a rebalancing of the force."

The navy's amphibious landing ship HMAS Kanimbla, which has a crew of 220, and a number of Black Hawk helicopters and their crews would return to Australia soon, Mr Howard said. After that, there would still be 2000 Australian military personnel in East Timor. "That is still a very big commitment," he said.

Mr Howard said he had made it clear to East Timorese leaders, including the newly sworn-in Prime Minister, Jose Ramos Horta, that Australia

would not have troops in the country indefinitely.

He said it was important for the country's leaders to be encouraged to "make the changes that are needed". Mr Ramos Horta wants Australia to lead a United Nations peacekeeping force in East Timor for at least two years. Mr Howard has given no commitment on the proposition.

But there would need to be a significant number of Australian troops or police in the country in the lead-up to the elections in May 2007, he said.

Life appears to be returning to normal in Dili, but tensions are likely to rise tomorrow when the deposed prime minister, Mari Alkatiri, appears in court. The former interior minister, Rogerio Lobato, claims Mr Alkatiri had "full knowledge" of a so-called hit squad allegedly set up to kill political rivals. Mr Alkatiri denies the allegation.

Aid officials say up to 100,000 displaced people in camps across Dili are too afraid to return home.

New East Timor government sworn in

Associated Press - July 14, 2006

East Timor's President Xanana Gusmao has sworn in a new cabinet, taking the tiny nation a step closer to normalcy after deadly violence in May left it in disarray.

The simple ceremony was witnessed by the freshly-installed Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta and his two deputies, and guarded by around 40 of the more than 2,200 Australian-led foreign peacekeepers sent to Dili to restore calm after East Timor descended into violence in May.

Ten members of the 15-strong Cabinet are holdovers from the government of former prime minister Mari Alkatiri, who resigned on June 26 to take responsibility for two months of violence that killed 30 people and sent 150,000 fleeing their homes.

Ramos Horta said he would hold the defence portfolio, which he took over when the then defence minister was sacked.

In a speech to the small crowd, Gusmao called on the new cabinet to focus on veterans who fought against the Indonesian occupation, and the country's youth, if they wanted to avoid further unrest in the impoverished nation.

"I told them (ministers) to pay attention to the youth and the veterans, because the violence that appeared happened because so many youths don't have any work," he said. "This should be a warning to all the government and the country, that this (unemployment) is not a burden that only youth have to bear," he added.

The new government includes Jose Luis Guterres, the country's ambassador to the United States as foreign minister, Inacio Moreira as transport and communications minister, Rosalia Corte-Real as education and culture minister, and Jose Teixeira, the outgoing tourism and environment minister as mineral and energy minister.

The new cabinet is expected to meet later on Friday and begin discussing the 2006-7 budget.

Ramos-Horta named as Timor's new prime minister

Agence France Presse - July 9, 2006

Dili — Nobel prize-winner Jose Ramos-Horta has been named as East Timor's new prime minister, President Xanana Gusmao announced Saturday, ending weeks of political uncertainty in the nation.

The premier's position was left empty last month when Mari Alkatiri resigned, bowing to pressure to take responsibility for violence which saw at least 21 people die and 150,000 flee their homes for makeshift refugee camps.

"We have agreed to declare as prime minister Jose Ramos-Horta, first deputy prime minister Estanislau da Silva and second deputy prime minister Rui Araujo," Gusmao said after meeting

with leaders from the ruling party. Da Silva is currently agriculture minister while Araujo is health minister.

"I believe they are going to meet either today (Saturday), tomorrow or the day after and we will announce when the swearing-in of this new government will take place," Gusmao said. "The programs of this new government will focus on solving this crisis so that the people can return home and the situation can normalise."

Ramos-Horta's spokesman Chris Santos told AFP that the new premier would not make any statement until Monday.

Naming a premier acceptable both to the ruling Fretilin party and Gusmao, who has been highly critical of its leaders, is crucial for Asia's poorest nation to begin forging a peaceful future after the unrest in May.

Alkatiri's Fretilin party, which commands an easy majority of 55 seats out of 88 in parliament, handed Gusmao a shortlist of candidates for the position on Friday. Ramos-Horta, who was East Timor's international face during its years of fighting Indonesia's occupation and won the 1996 Nobel peace prize for his efforts, was foreign and defence minister in Alkatiri's government. He is not a member of the decades-old Fretilin party but helped found it.

The 56-year-old, who will run the country until elections due in early 2007, has been widely seen as a potentially unifying leader for the young nation, which finally became independent in 2002.

He told local radio before the announcement that in order for the new government to function properly, he believed East Timor's next prime minister needed to be "brave and possess an open conscience." "The person must be able to hold dialogue with everyone, including the (Catholic) Church," he said. "There has to be dialogue with the private sector in order to boost the economy and provide jobs for unemployed youths."

A veteran diplomat, Ramos-Horta has acted as a roving peace-maker in recent weeks, actively meeting with disgruntled rebel groups and military factions to seek reconciliation between them.

The May unrest was triggered by Alkatiri sacking some 600 soldiers, or nearly half of the nation's armed forces, after they deserted complaining of discrimination because they came from the west.

More than 2,200 Australian-led foreign peacekeepers were deployed to East Timor to restore calm amid the unrest and they continue to patrol the capital, though occasional outbreaks of violence have occurred since their arrival.

Late Saturday the streets remained peaceful, with Australian troops roaming the city in armoured personnel vehicles.

Many ordinary East Timorese welcomed Ramos-Horta's appointment. "This is good because Mr. Horta is well known everywhere and he does not take the side of any group, he embraces everybody," 27-year-old school teacher Joao Cabral told AFP. Alalu da Silva, a 30-year-old chef, echoed a common view in saying he believed he would bring stability. "He deserves to be in the post because he can bring peace," he said.

Jose Ramos-Horta, the voice of East Timor

Agence France Presse - July 8, 2006

Dili — Jose Ramos-Horta, the Nobel peace laureate who spent decades campaigning for East Timor's independence from Indonesia, was appointed the nation's prime minister Saturday.

Ramos-Horta, 56, is a political independent hailed as a potentially unifying leader, who has served as foreign minister of the half-island nation since it won independence from its neighbour in 2002.

He is believed to have edged out his former wife and Minister for State Ana Pessoa, with whom he has a grown son, as well as two other ministers in the ruling Fretilin party to claim the top job.

The elegant polyglot, who typically sports a five o'clock shadow and wears snazzy bow ties, saw his status rise at home in the aftermath of tragic

violence which rocked the capital Dili and its surrounds in May.

Fierce fighting between rival factions of the security forces as well as street gangs wielding machetes and swords led to the deaths of at least 21 people and saw some 150,000 petrified East Timorese flee their homes.

Ramos-Horta takes over from Mari Alkatiri, who stepped down on June 26 amid demands he take responsibility for the crisis, sparked by his decision in March to sack 600 soldiers, or nearly half the armed forces. As Alkatiri's star has dimmed, Ramos-Horta's profile has risen.

The veteran statesman has acted as a roving peace-maker, meeting with disgruntled rebel groups and the military seeking reconciliation, and also taking on the critical role of defence minister. "He's the only known figure people have confidence in," Australian-based political analyst Bob Lowry told AFP.

The ex-journalist's diplomatic career began when at the age of 25 he was named foreign minister in the government of Fretilin, then the political wing of Falintil, which fought against the Portuguese colonisers and later Indonesia.

With Indonesia appearing poised to invade his country, Ramos-Horta left in a bid to convince the UN Security Council to back their cause. He failed but his promotion of the East Timorese cause had begun.

He spent 10 years in New York, where he discovered a passion for the cinema and traditional jazz but also became familiar with the workings of the United Nations, where he led the permanent delegation of Fretilin.

Ramos-Horta ceaselessly denounced the "genocide" he accused the Indonesians of perpetrating, and lobbied for the international community to intervene, with or without the mandate of the UN.

In a New York Times interview last month, he recounted how, struggling to get East Timor onto the world's agenda, he once plastered stickers reading "Free Xanana, Boycott Bali" on the back of toilet doors at a rights conference.

He wanted the well-known resort island's name to pique delegates' interest in then-unknown Xanana Gusmao, who led East Timor's guerrilla movement and is now East Timor's respected president. The Wall Street Journal responded with a front-page story.

Ramos-Horta's efforts were recognised with the Nobel peace prize in 1996, which he shared with Bishop Carlos Belo, the leader of East Timor's majority Catholic population, in a major boost for East Timor's global profile.

In 1999, the East Timorese finally voted to become independent, sparking bloody reprisals by Indonesian-backed militia groups who killed an estimated 1,400 people before an international force restored order.

Ramos-Horta then returned home after 24 years in exile. During his time away, at least 102,800 Timorese, or 10 percent of the population, were estimated to have died as a result of Indonesian policies. Among them were three of Ramos-Horta's brothers and one sister.

With a Portuguese father and Timorese mother, he speaks Portuguese, English, French and Tetum, the language of East Timor.

Ramos-Horta's name had been floated as a potential candidate for succeeding UN secretary-general Kofi Annan but he told AFP in an interview this month that he was not pursuing the job. "What notice would be taken of the secretary-general if I abandoned my own country in its time of need?" he asked.

Alkatiri lashes Australia over bias

Sydney Morning Herald - July 6, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch, Dili — East Timor's deposed prime minister, Mari Alkatiri, last night lashed out at Australia, saying there was an attempt to demonise him in the media and that some government ministers and officials "don't like me".

Mr Alkatiri told the Herald he believes he was targeted in Australia because of his tough negotiations over oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea.

"I have no doubt that the whole of the Australian media was trying to demonise me — that is the reality," Mr Alkatiri said in his first interview with an Australian journalist since he was forced to resign last week.

"Why? I have no doubt that some ministers and officers in Australia don't like me because I was known to them as a tough negotiator."

Mr Alkatiri said that Australia and East Timor could lose by his downfall because he was about to introduce into parliament a bill to ratify a \$41 billion deal he had negotiated with Canberra to develop the Greater Sunrise oil and gas field in the Timor Sea, under which both countries would equally share royalties. "Now everything is back on the table," he said.

Mr Alkatiri described his downfall as an "orchestrated plot". Asked who he believes was behind it, he said he still has to do some work before accusing anyone. "I'm sure that one day it will all come out," he said.

Speaking for the first time about his political intentions, Mr Alkatiri declared that he would remain secretary-general of the Fretilin party and lead it into elections scheduled for next year. Fretilin holds the majority of seats in parliament and has by far the largest number of members throughout the country.

"Winning the election is my main task now," he said. "But this will be much more difficult because of the security situation. Fretilin members, particularly those in western parts of the country, are still being intimidated by armed men."

Mr Alkatiri said that unless the security situation improved "it may be difficult to arrange the elections".

Asked whether he could be re-appointed prime minister if Fretilin wins, he said: "That will be a decision for the party ... I hope the party will

not force me. Maybe it is better to have others to be prime minister ... maybe what we have to do is not think about the past and look forward."

Asked about widespread speculation that the Nobel laureate Jose Ramos Horta would be appointed to replace him within days, Mr Alkatiri said he could not comment. "Fretilin has put up three different packages ... three different names," he said. "What is needed in this country now is reconciliation leading to the elections."

Mr Ramos Horta, the Foreign and Defence minister, is no longer a member of Fretilin but is a founding member of the party.

Under the constitution, Fretilin as the majority party has the right to nominate the prime minister but the nominee must be approved by the president. Mr Ramos Horta is a close ally of President Xanana Gusmao.

Mr Alkatiri declined to answer questions about allegations he helped form a hit squad to eliminate political rivals before the elections. He has denied any knowledge of the hit squads.

The country's former interior minister, Rogerio Lobato, has claimed in court that Mr Alkatiri had "full knowledge" of the squad that was given high-powered weapons allegedly looted from the country's police armoury. Mr Lobato is under house arrest in Dili.

In a sign that some stability is returning to Dili, Mr Ramos Horta yesterday met Asian investors about a \$100 million project to produce energy from green waste.

Fretilin takes aim at legal system

Sydney Morning Herald - July 4, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch in Dili and agencies — East Timor's ruling Fretilin party has moved to restructure the office of the country's top prosecutor in a move seen by opposition MPs as an attempt to protect the deposed prime minister Mari Alkatiri from criminal prosecution.

The party angered opposition MPs at parliament's first sitting in weeks yesterday, when it introduced a resolution to restructure the Office of Prosecutor-General within the Public Affairs Ministry.

The Prosecutor-General, Longuinhos Monteiro, last week summoned Mr Alkatiri to a hearing to answer questions about allegations that he helped form a hit squad to eliminate political rivals in advance of elections scheduled for next year. Mr Alkatiri failed to attend, saying his lawyer had not arrived from overseas.

Fretilin's president and parliamentary Speaker, Francisco Guterres, introduced another resolution yesterday inviting Mr Alkatiri to sit in parliament. Fretilin insists this would give him immunity from prosecution.

Mr Monteiro said last night he had written a letter to parliament asking it to waive any immunity. He told the Herald that if parliament agreed with his request, he would send another summons for Mr Alkatiri to attend court.

Mr Monteiro would not comment on Fretilin's move against his office. He earlier told reporters that Mr Alkatiri could face prosecution, depending on his answers, after the former interior minister Rogerio Lobato told another hearing last month that the former prime minister had "full knowledge" of the hit squad, armed with automatic weapons looted from the police armoury.

An opposition MP, Joao Gonclaves, last night accused Fretilin of trying to "bulldoze a resolution against the Prosecutor-General that is unconstitutional and illegal because the Prosecutor-General is independent of parliament".

Fretilin's moves prompted angry outbursts in parliament. "They're manipulators," said the deputy opposition leader, Lucia Lobato, adding that Fretilin wanted to axe the position of prosecutor-general.

But Fretilin's deputy Speaker, Jacob Fernandes, said the party's only concern was to re-establish the rule of law after months of unrest. "The courts must not be used to persecute people politically," he said.

Mr Alkatiri remains the key behind-the-scenes powerbroker in Fretilin, which, under the constitution, has the right to name the next prime minister.

Ramos Horta urges Australia to lead UN force

Melbourne Age - July 3, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch, Dili — Nobel laureate Jose Ramos Horta, who has taken control of East Timor's crippled Government, has called for Australia to lead a UN peacekeeping force for at least 12 months.

Mr Ramos Horta has called a meeting of ministers this morning to discuss crises confronting the country, including chronic malnutrition and fears that food supplies to 150,000 refugees who fled violence could run out.

Australia doubled its donation for emergency rations for the refugees after the United Nations World Food Program warned that chronic malnutrition in refugee camps was already as bad as in the worst places in Africa.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said an extra \$4 million would help make up a shortfall in emergency food aid to 66 refugee camps in Dili. "Food supplies are getting lower," Mr Downer said. "If nothing is done for several weeks, then this will become a real problem."

The ruling Fretilin party opened the way for Mr Ramos Horta to become caretaker prime minister when it agreed to consider a candidate who was not a party member. "I am not a member of Fretilin. I left 15 years ago," he said. "But I am a founding member of Fretilin and I have strong relationships with all of their leaders."

Mr Ramos Horta said President Xanana Gusmao agreed to negotiate the formation of a caretaker government with Fretilin after party leaders calmed their supporters and called on "Fretilin elements" with weapons to hand them over.

Mr Gusmao, who must approve the new government, had earlier said he would refuse to deal with Fretilin's leaders because they were illegally elected at a party national congress.

"The President told me he had relented and asked me to convey to Fretilin that he was prepared to talk with their leaders," Mr Ramos Horta said. "I believe that this really broke the deadlock and I believe that by the end of the week we will have a consensus name for prime minister." Mr Ramos Horta revealed that Fretilin had "sounded me out" on serving in a caretaker government. "I said I am available to serve in any capacity in a Fretilin government," he said.

The constitution states that Fretilin as the majority party has the right to nominate the prime minister.

As co-ordinating minister, Mr Ramos Horta effectively became the country's leader when Fretilin prime minister Mari Alkatiri was forced from office last week following allegations that he knew about a hit squad to eliminate political rivals. The new prime minister will lead the country until elections next year.

In an interview, Mr Ramos Horta called for the first time for Australia to lead UN peacekeepers in East Timor. The UN has already agreed to send 1000 international police, many of them Australians.

"The security situation has significantly improved compared to when the Australians first arrived," Mr Ramos Horta said, "but the situation is still very precarious". "If we do have a problem breaking out in remote areas... I prefer that we have robust army here with helicopters to quell any problems."

Mick Slater, the commander of Australia's more than 2000-strong peacekeeping force in Dili, said yesterday: "Whether we transform into some sort of UN force is yet to be seen." The United Nations has a team in Dili assessing the situation.

"Once the UN decides what it is going to do, we will no doubt tailor our future commitment here to support the UN intentions," Brigadier Slater said.

JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION

UN's legacy of shame in Timor

Melbourne Age - July 22, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch, Dili — United Nations
peacekeepers have abandoned at least 20 babies
fathered with poverty-stricken Timorese women.

A UN investigation has also uncovered a culture of cover-up, in which babies born to peacekeepers and sex crimes committed by UN staff in the past seven years have been kept secret because of a "fear of shame and embarrassment" in the deeply religious country.

The findings will shock the UN bureaucracy as it prepares to boost by thousands its peacekeeping force in East Timor.

A report on the investigation, obtained by The Age, recommends that a policy of zero tolerance of sexual misconduct be enforced on UN staff sent to help rebuild the country after two months of violence.

UN peacekeepers in East Timor have previously been accused of offences including child sex abuse, bestiality, and coercing women and children into prostitution. No one has ever been charged.

But the report reveals for the first time that babies born to UN peacekeepers have been abandoned without financial support. It also makes clear that the births of these children, and other instances of sexual misconduct by UN personnel, are likely to have been significantly under-reported.

The report says that the Timorese mothers of the babies fathered by peacekeepers have been stigmatised and, in some cases, ostracised by their communities. It also found that efforts within the UN to organise help for the women have failed.

In the mountainous coffee growing district of Ermera, soldiers have left behind seven young children after earlier promising to marry their mothers, the report says. In the district of Bobonaro, four babies were allegedly fathered by

two UN police and two civilian staff.

A dowry was apparently paid to one family. But in most cases, the mother's family has been left to support the children.

The report was written by Sofi Ospina, an anthropologist commissioned by the UN to investigate the gender-related impact on East Timor of having 18,000 uniformed and civilian UN personnel from 113 nations in the country after UN operations began in 1999.

It comes as Secretary-General Kofi Annan prepares a report for the UN Security Council on the composition of a new mission for East Timor when the current one expires next month.

Ian Martin, a special UN envoy, has recommended the Security Council send police units backed by a rapid response force. He also recommends a military presence at least until after elections scheduled for May, and UN advisers to help organise the vote.

There are now 2500 Australian soldiers and police in East Timor, mostly in the capital, Dili.

While thousands of Australian soldiers and police have served in East Timor since 1999, none have been accused of sexual misconduct. The behaviour of some peacekeepers has outraged many UN staff, several of whom have resigned in disgust.

In one of the worst instances detailed in Ms Ospina's report, a peacekeeper from an unnamed country is alleged to have abused two boys and two girls in the enclave of Oecussi.

In early 2001, two soldiers were sent home with injured penises after allegedly attempting sexual intercourse with goats.

Ms Ospina says that, as in other UN operations, the arrival of peacekeepers has attracted prostitution. She refers to a study showing that in 2004 there were 250 female and 110 male sex workers in Dili. Of the males, 75 per cent were younger than 18.

The report says the fear and reluctance to report sexual misconduct by UN personnel may be justified. Both the perpetrators and, usually, the

person to whom such cases would be reported are men in positions of relative power, the report says.

Local administrative authority is usually embedded in a traditional mind-set influenced by conservative Catholic ideology, it says. Women may expect not to receive a sympathetic hearing in such a context.

The report warns that the UN's credibility could be compromised by its inability to ensure that staff who commit sex crimes are prosecuted.

It recommends that commanders should communicate and enforce a policy of zero tolerance for sexual misconduct. There should be immediate repatriation and disciplinary measures for all offenders.

The report says that accusations and rumours of sexual abuse should be investigated. Pregnancies and births resulting from sex with Timorese women should be documented and the UN should make sure that non-government organisations help the mothers and their children.

Officials, TNI back probe into Timor Leste abuses

Jakarta Post - July 1, 2006

Abdul Khalik, Jakarta — The joint Indonesia-Timor Leste Truth and Friendship Commission said Friday it received backing of Indonesian Military (TNI) and government officials to query all those allegedly involved in human rights abuses following the 1999 independence referendum.

The commission's co-chairman from Timor Leste, Dionisio Babo Soares, said that the coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs, defense minister, foreign minister, TNI chief, National Police chief and members of House of Representatives had all expressed their support for the commission to question former and active military and civilian officials implicated in violence in the former Indonesian province of East Timor.

"We are now in the final stage of document review. In one or two months, we will begin interviewing all people related to the case. And Indonesian ministers and lawmakers pledged their support for our work during our meeting with them," he told a press conference.

Indonesia and Timor Leste established the 10-member commission in August 2005, with the five representatives of each country charged with investigating human rights abuses committed in the tiny country. According to the United Nations, at least 1,500 people were killed by militia groups allegedly backed by the Indonesian Military.

The commission, with a mandate until August 2007 and modeled on similar restorative justice bodies set up in South Africa, Chile and Argentina, has no powers to prosecute alleged human rights violators. However, it can give recommendations to the Indonesian and Timor Leste governments to grant amnesty to people who confessed to involvement and expressed remorse, and to compensate victims and rehabilitate victims.

The commission said it reviewed all existing materials documented by the Indonesian National Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights Violation in Timor Leste (KPP HAM), and the Ad-Hoc Human Rights Court on East Timor, as well as reports from the Special Panels for Serious Crimes and the Commission of Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor Leste to determine the existence of human rights violations and people implicated in the acts.

The commission has identified 14 incidents of gross human rights violations that occurred in 1999 around the time East Timor voted to split from Indonesia.

A commission member from Indonesia, Achmad Ali, added that Gen. (ret.) Wiranto, the military chief during the unrest, was among the high-ranking officials who agreed to meet with the commission to explain the course of events in 1999.

The legal expert from Makassar's Hasanuddin University declined to name other former and active officers, but based on the four documents, Brig. Gen. A. Nur Muis, a former chief of the now defunct Wira Dharma military command that oversaw

East Timor during the ballot, and the then chief of the Dili military command, Lt. Col. Sudjarwo, will likely be questioned.

The Indonesian Ad-Hoc Human Rights Court has tried the two officers and 16 other members of the military on human rights charges relating to East Timor. The court has never found any middle- or high-ranking military and police officers guilty of involvement in the atrocities.

The court only sentenced Eurico Guterres, former leader of the pro-Indonesia militia group Aitarak, to 10 years in prison, while former East Timor governor Abilio Jose Osorio Soares was sentenced to three years in prison by the Supreme Court. Eight months later he was acquitted of all charges because of new evidence.

Earlier, Gen. Fahrul Razi of the Indonesian Army provided an explanation to the commission.

DAILY MEDIA REVIEWS

East Timor daily media review July 3-31

[Compiled by the United Nations mission in Timor (UNOTIL).]

July 29/31, 2006

PNTL should maintain impartially: Barris

Minister of Interior, Alcino Barris has appealed to members of PNTL not to favour groups and political parties, as impartiality is important to maintain law and order. Last Wednesday and Thursday Barris travelled to districts of Oecussi, Bobonaro and Manufahi together with the representative of European Union, and the international forces. He added the Ministry of Interior is currently working on the program for the reintegration of PNTL officers and to assist those who will not rejoin the PNTL. (TP)

Head Of village rejects reconstruction

The Head of Village from Bidau said the fifteen small trading shops along the road in Suku Bidau; Lecidere would not be reconstructed according to the decision of the authorities. Jaime da Silva

Soares, the chefe sucu of Bidau said the population couldn't build houses as the area is a state owned property and he asks the population to respect the decision. Soares added one team from the government will conduct research on the area referred and he had already submitted a report to the sub-administrator to collect data and pay the people who had lost their goods as a result of the burning. He added the houses along the road belong to the State therefore the area would be cleaned up and replaced with gardens according to government plans. (TP)

Timor-Leste still needs GNR

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta said the demands by the protesters for the withdrawal of the Portuguese elite police, GNR is not justifiable because the people making these demands want to commit violence against the defenceless innocent people. Ramos-Horta said GNR will continue in Timor-Leste due to their good work and he appealed to the population to maintain calm and not provoke each other and allow time for the international community to proceed with the investigation (of the 28 April cases) and for the Prosecutor General to keep an eye on the justice as demanded. He also appealed to youths with bad intention stressing the population have suffered too much since April up until now and the State does not tolerate burning and killings therefore he said youths with such bad intention should think twice. The Prime Minister also appeals to stop the protest as it is destabilizing the country adding that Timor-Leste belongs to all and its name has sunk in the international community due to the recent violence.

In a separate article Brigadier Mick Slater said if small groups want to destabilize the country they would have to face the international forces from four nations, adding the troops will try to work with the youths and convince them the nation needs strong youth to carry the country forward. On the detention of Alfredo, Slater said he was detained due to the weapons he had in the house and the protest in favor of Reinado had to be stopped because they did not have the authorization from the government. (DN, TP)

Indication of corruption on execution of state budget

MP Alexandre Corte-Real, member of Commission C of the Parliament in charge of Economy and Finance said the State quarterly budget for 2005/2006 between January -March, has indication of corruption because most of the projects have not been completed but the report says 85% of the budget have been executed. Corte-Real cited as an example the project of the Airport, which has been claimed as completed but in reality half of it still not complete and he says that, worse, more money has been allocated for the mentioned projects for the new budget for the fiscal year 2006/2007. (TP)

Border market scheduled for operation by September

The meeting between Timor-Leste Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta and the President of Indonesia, Susilo Yudhoyono resulted in an agreement to resume the border market operation and implementation of border pass for families living close to the border between the two countries. The Prime Minister also told the media during a press conference on Friday that the Indonesian President also supports the World Bank project to rehabilitate the road between Oecussi and Motaain. The Minister also said many Indonesians have shown interest in investing on the Timor Oil exploration. (DN)

July 28, 2006

Alfredo's detention orchestrated: Lawyer

GNR Accused Of Orchestrating Alfredo Arrest
+Australian Troops Not Consistent With Alfredo's Group, Alfredo Supporters Asks GNR to Withdraw From TL

According to Alfredo's lawyer Benevides Correia Barros, the arrest of Major Alfredo was political maneuver because Alfredo had already informed the Prosecutor General, Longuinhos Monteiro and the Australian troops that they had weapons and were ready to hand them over. "Before they handed in the weapons to the international troops, GNR and the Australian troops had already ambushed Alfredo place" said Barros. STL reported that Alfredo and

his members will be detained by the international forces at the Police District Headquarters for 30 days for further investigation.

In a separate article, MP Leandro Isac told the media that he disagrees with the detention of Alfredo by the international troops who because they are not consistent with the law. "You took all the weapons in Maubisse in front of all the media, then you brought him to Dili and now capture him again" said Isac. According to Isac the International troops are not applying the rule of law correctly "

TP reports that Alfredo supporters are asking (Guarda Nacional da Republica) GNR to withdraw from Timor-Leste because the capture of Alfredo was not based on legal procedure. A member of the supporters, Apolonario dos Santos told the media that " We ask Australian Police and Malaysian to stay in their barracks and let GNR patrol Dili so we can confront them" They also demand the release of Alfredo and his followers. A representative of the supporters in charge of the protest, Carmona Soares said Alfredo must be released or they will continue the protest and call for more supporters from the 10 districts. Soares said the international forces of Australia should not capture Alfredo as he has the right to carry weapons because he is a military man. He added those that should be detained are the civilians in possession of weapons like a person called Maukiak who he claims shot dead members of the police in front of the Public Ministry. Carmona Soares warned that if Alfredo is not released there would be more violence and burnings in Dili. Carmona's group also wants the GNR to be neutral and stop the detention of youths who have become victims of the conflict, adding the group is prepared to die if Alfredo is not released. (STL, TP, DN)

Australia Embassy helps Timorese youths

The Australian Government has donated a total over US\$76,000 for Timor-Leste through the Direct Aid Project (DAP) for the fiscal year 2006/2007. According to a press release from the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste, the funds were allocated for projects concentrated in the districts namely Manatuto, Baucau, Viqueque, Ermera, Liquiga and Dili in the areas of rehabilitation of libraries, new roads, access to clean water, furniture for

the orphanages and community training in the in agriculture. Through this project, US\$2, 490 has been allocated for programs in the IDPs center to train around 100 youths aged between 5-18 by 6 workers in the camps. The Australian embassy DAP began in 2000 with the aim of improving the living conditions of the less privileged. (DN)

July 27, 2006

International forces detain Alfredo

Today the first page of the main newspapers focus on the detention of Major Alfredo Reinado and his group and the handover of weapons by another group claiming to have been armed by the former Interior Minister, Rogerio Lobato.

According to the media the international forces detained Alfredo and 21 of his elements after they were caught with weapons in a house in Bairro Pitj in Dili. Military spokesperson James Baker said 9 pistols, 16 magazines and various ammunition were found in the residence. Baker said the troops continue to observe the direction from Brigadier Slater that anyone found with guns in Dili would be detained and investigated, as was the case of Major Alfredo and his elements who are now under the international forces detention.

In the meantime a group called Labadain turned in 2 HK33 to the President of the Republic in his residence who, in turn, handed them over to the Prosecutor General on Wednesday. Labadain allegedly claims the Minister of Interior gave guns to his group in the presence of an official from the Ministry of Interior code named ES, a member of PN (National Parliament) code named JM accompanied by a member of Unidade Intervencao Rapida (UIR) with the initial N. Labadain said after receiving the guns they hurriedly left to Nuntali in Railko area with a total of 32 guns, saying the rest of the guns continue to be in the hands of other members of the group. He further said the weapons had not yet been handed in due to lack of information, adding the rest, 30 can be organized to turn them into the international police following the authorization from a Member

of Parliament with the initials JM.

Timor Post reported Major James Baker as saying Alfredo and his group were detained as per the orders of international forces commander, Brigadier Slater because they are now considered as illegal military adding if the group still considers itself as part of the military they should remain in the armed forces headquarters and not live among the population. In relation to the detention, Prosecutor General Longuinhos Monteiro said both he and the President of the Republic did not impede in the capture of Alfredo and his elements.

MP Pedro da Costa (PST) said the detention of Alfredo and his group will not put an end to the problems but it is a start to resolve the crisis.

Media and political conspiracy: Branco

MP Francisco Branco said as a citizen and politician he is concerned with the reality situation of Timor-Leste which is full of hypocrisy, starting from the media, politicians and the civil society. No one is lifting a finger to point out that something is not right in the country.

Speaking on Wednesday in the plenary session of the National Parliament, about the intervention of the supreme organ on the current situation especially by the Prosecutor General, Branco said "people we classified as criminal, carrying armed assault rifles and, have caused death ...()...are free to go to parties, dance, and busily host visitors. But those on the same condition are treated differently. Therefore I see there is big discrimination in terms of justice for the citizens, for those we consider practiced crimes in our nation. That's why as a politician I'm really concerned. Our society, politicians and the media are not denouncing these things. It shows that we are hypocrites or scared of what? I do not know." Branco said people should not be scared to speak, as Timor-Leste is a new democratic society with freedom of media and expression. (DN, TP, STL)

President must explain Alfredo arrest: Amaral

Vice-President of the National Parliament,

Francisco Xavier do Amaral, said the President must explain in the Parliament why he gave the orders for the international forces to detain Alfredo. MP Pedro da Costa said the measures taken by the international forces have been good in order to identify the guns currently in Timor-Leste and determine the one's used by PNTL and F-FDTL including those of the reserve units and whether civilians are also using guns including some internationals who might have manipulated the Timorese to enter into a conflict against each other. He said the court must call Alfredo to answer why he had not handed in all the guns as he had claimed adding if he did not hand in the guns with good will it would only show that it was a cosmetic show creating an environment of mistrust within the communities. (DN)

July 26, 2006

State honors victims of the Crisis

President Xanana Gusmao said the crisis in Timor-Leste is the State responsibility therefore those who died as a result of the crisis must be honored. Gusmao said the Bishop of Dili Diocese, Alberto Ricardo opened his heart to celebrate the mass for all who died during the crisis especially the children and the old as well as members of PNTL and F-FDTL. Gusmao said honoring the dead is only a small contribution and the government is looking into relieving the population's suffering but those who suffered the most were the one's killed. The President also said Deputy Prime Minister Estanislau da Silva spoke to the widows and assured them the government would not close an eye to them. Responding to the killings still taking place in some areas, President Gusmao said the UN police will arrive on August 15 and those continuing to commit crime will be punished. A mass was celebrated in Dili Cathedral to commemorate those died during April 28 and May 25 incident, followed by laying of flowers wreaths at the ocean in front of the Government Palace in Dili.

During the homily Bishop Ricardo said President Xanana personally asked for the mass as a

Christian and to bring together everybody to commemorate the mass for the deceased ones. According to STL, leaders and members F-FDTL did not participate in the mass.

In a separate article in Diario Nacional Minister of Interior Alcino Barris said the 8 police officers who died were victims because they died with bullets in their bodies. Barris also said PNTL will resume their work on August 1 as the State crisis ends on 30 July saying one of the areas that needs attention is transit. (STL, TP, DN)

Railos Rejects Lu'Olo statement

Vicente da Conceicao alias Railos said he rejects the statement of Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres that he is not a member of Fretilin. Railos said Lu'Olo knows that he is a member because he saw him (Railos) during the second Fretilin national congress. Railos said he and his group were the representative from Bazartete, Liquica District saying he has Fretilin delegate card as evidence. He rejects that the group was Fretilin's secret group. But he said it was a group reporting only to Fretilin's Secretary General, Mari Alkatiri and Rogerio Lobato. He says he fully supports Fretilin Group for Changes because he defends Fretilin as an organization and not one or two individuals. (STL)

Alkatiri is not like Fujimori: Branco

MP Francisco Branco (Fretilin) told the media on Tuesday that former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri is not like Alberto Fujimori. Branco was responding to the statement released by PSD and Leando Isac that Alkatiri should not follow Fujimori footsteps. Further to the statement Branco said unlike Fujimori, Alkatiri was the founder of Fretilin party and added Alkatiri would not leave East Timor and is willing to continuing living in the country.

In a separate article Deputy Prime Minister Estanislau da Silva said Mari Alkatiri still requires security protection as former Prime Minister and also because he has to go to the court adding his life is at risk as people have threatened him. Da Silva said Alkatiri has not been found guilty therefore he still requires

protection in order to participate in the court process to be able to help resolve the crisis.
(STL, TP)

UNICEF director visits Timor

UNICEF Director for South East Asia and the Pacific, Anupama Rao Singh arrived in Dili on Sunday (23/7) for a four-day visit. The visit would allow the head of UNICEF for this region to review the emergency assistance for UNICEF in the next three months. On Monday Singh went to the refugee camp in Don Bosco and met the coordinator of the center, Fr. Adriano and spoke to the IDPs. She also met with leaders of women's organizations namely the first lady, Kirsty Sword-Gusmao, Bishop Alberto Ricardo and government officials. On Tuesday she travel to Liquica District and met with IDP coordinator for that area, head of education and health department in Liquica. Today, Wednesday she was scheduled to meet with President Gusmao and speak to the media about UNICEF work in the region.(STL)

Rogério's lawyers rejects Monteiro's statement

Rogério's lawyer Paulo dos Remedios rejects declaration of Prosecutor General Longuinhos Monteiro who said that Rogério himself recognized the allegation from Railos group which claimed that their weapons were received from him. "The Prosecutor General should bring the evidence to the court so the judge can read it and say what date our client gave the weapons to Railos group" said Remedios. He said the Prosecutor General should not speak in public because the secrecy of justice and the court will decide the case. (TP)

Major Alfredo caught with weapons by forces

Major Alfredo Reinado was captured with weapons by International forces in Bairo Pite. Spokesperson for Battalion Battle Group James Baker told the media that they have appealed to all people who still carrying weapons to surrender them but Alfredo and his member still carry weapons. "We will process him and his members according to law"said Baker."If they didn't carry weapons why did we capture him," Baker asked. (TP, DN)

Population shouldn't be forced to return home:
Bishop

Ministry of Labor and Solidarity allocated 300 sacks of rice to the refugees who live in Aileu. Aileu district administrator Xisto Amaral told the DN reporter that starting from last Friday 214 families including widows already received rice. He said the rice was not only distributed to Aileu city but also to the four sub-districts.

In a separate article Bishop of Dili Diocese, Alberto Ricardo da Silva told the media that people should not be forced to return home because the security still is not stable enough for them to return home. "The people who still stay in refugee camps, most of them are still traumatized because the security is not good enough to guarantee their safety," said the bishop. (DN)

July 25, 2006

PNTL hands over weapons

Members of PNTL and the civil society handed in more weapons on Monday following Brigadier Slater appeal: about 10 heavy weapons, 50 pistols, ammunition and gas. Speaking during a press conference on Monday, Slater said anyone apprehended with guns following Monday's deadline will be detained by the forces. He also said an inventory of the national police weapons will take place in the next 10 days adding the police officers in the districts are entitle to carry their guns for work purposes. The Australian Brigadier said so far a total of 1000 guns have been collected. In the meantime the commander of the international police in Timor-Leste, Steve Lancaster who according to STL has the full support of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior said the guns handed in on Monday is a first step for the reintegration of PNTL to continue their services. Lancaster said in the past 3 weeks a team of the international police have questioned around 830 people in relation to crime such murder and burning of houses. He further said the international police are coordinating with the Minister of Interior and the United Nations to develop a plan for future reintegration of PNTL and in order to enable them to carry their work

independently in future. The police commander also said from 7 to August 10 the international police will be fully responsible for the security reminding the population that the international troops will continue to be in Timor-Leste, adding a new police hotline, likely to be 112, would be established to facilitate direct contact.

In a separate article, Brigadier Slater said 12 guns from F-FDTL have been reported missing since the crisis started.

Minister of Interior Alcino Barris traveled to Viqueque to ask PNTL officers who have fled to that district to return to work. During the meeting he said a new structure for PNTL would take place in the district followed by better training for police officers especially in the area of code of discipline. Barris said one of the concerns presented by officers to resume work, were accommodation as some have lost their homes. (STL, TP DN)

Timor signs accord on joint oil exploration

To continue the joint exploration in the Timor Sea for gas, Timor-Leste signed an agreement on Monday between Timor-Leste, Woodside (Australia), INPEX (Japan) and Talisman (Canada). Jose Lobato, the Executive Officer of the Timor Sea Designated Office, said the new agreement is based on new regulations because the Timor Sea treaty was signed under an interim regulation. Present at the signing were Prime Minister Ramos-Horta and Minister for Natural Resources, Energy and Minerals, Jose Teixeira. (TP, DN, STL)

Reinado's group ordered to relocate to Dili

President Gusmao has written to Reinado and his group to relocate to Dili and according to Reinado he will follow the orders as President Gusmao is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Reinado and his group fled to Maubisse during the crisis. In separate article Reinado appealed to youths not to incline too much to politics and they should careful analyze the situation in the country for the safety of unity.

He said many youths in Dili are still looking at each other not in a friendly manner and they should know that without extending their hands and

embrace each the nation will not move forward.
(TP, DN)

Protesters demands government resolve crisis The National Unity Movement (MUN) held a demonstration yesterday in capital Dili and demanded the four sovereign bodies to resolve the crisis urgently especially to reintegrate the refugees to their places. The coordinator of MUN, Bruno C. Magalhes told the media "the objective of the demonstration is to demand the four sovereign bodies to resolve the crisis in the country" He further added that the demonstration would continue until 28 July and they will work closely with the security to avoid any conflict. (TP, DN)

Horta to discuss border crossing during visit

Prime Minister Ramos Horta is visiting Jakarta to discuss border crossing with the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). Horta told the media before his departure that to improve the economic development between the two countries there is a need to open the market in the border as well as build a road from Oecussi to Mota-Ain to maintain good relation with the investors He further said the border still needs 1% to be finalized. (DN)

Fretilin never formed secret group: Lu'Olo

In response to the declaration of RaiLos group that they were a Fretilin secret group, president of Fretilin party, Francisco Guterres "Lu'Olo" said that Fretilin never formed any secret group because Fretilin is a political party and has the majority of the support. Lu'Olo also rejected all accusations that he had been involved in the recent political crisis, adding he has been trying his best to work with the President of the Republic, to resolve the political crisis. (DN)

Extraordinary meeting before approval of budget

Before the government presents the state budget for fiscal year 2006/2007 to the National Parliament to approve, president of National Parliament Francisco Guterres Lu'Olo held an extraordinary meeting with all Parliamentarians at National Parliament with the Minister of Council, Antonino Bianco to discuss budget. After the meeting Lu Olo told the media the budget would be

US\$ 315, 5 millions but the allocation of it was not discussed. He said there were different opinions because some parliamentarians prefer that the second constitutional government, lead by Jose Ramos Horta should have their own budget plan rather than a continuation of the first government's plan. "We finally came to a conclusion that the state budget will be approved and sent to commission C (budget commission in parliament) for further discussion" said Lu'Olo. He added the Parliament would call the Prime Minister to defend the budget for fiscal year 2006/2007 which is really big but he believes that the government can implement it because all the ministers' have their own plan and they have the capacity to do so. (DN)

July 21, 2006

Fretilin will let Alkatiri be imprisoned if found guilty

President of Fretilin's bench in the Parliament, Francisco Branco said his party would support the imprisonment of Mari Alkatiri if the court finds him guilty but if he is not found guilty everybody should welcome him with open arms. Branco said Alkatiri should not be condemned the way he is now, adding he should be tried in an independent court. He says he doesn't believe Alkatiri was involved in the recent allegations. On the lawyers defending Alkatiri, Francisco Branco said these lawyers offered their services to the former Prime Minister free of charges and also it is an international prestige for them. He added that Mari Alkatiri asked for international lawyers due to the limited resources in the legal system. In a separate article MP Joao Goncalves (PSD) said if Mari Alkatiri is found guilty in, it would be a big shame to the international lawyers as it would not be good for their reputation. (STL, DN)

Civilian group hands guns to forces

Timor Post reported that civilian groups have handed over their weapons to the international troops, the Australians in Ermera. Operational commander in Ermera district, Mick Magbire told TP

that the guns of type HK3 with 556 rounds of ammunition were taken by the Australian troops from civilian groups under the responsibility of Francisco da Cruz. "Two guns were handed to Ermera District PNTL commander, Sub inspector Jacinto da Conceicao who than handed them to us" said Magbire. Ermera District community leader, Eduardo de Deus said he was happy with the handover of guns and hopes other groups could do the same asked the international troops to process them under rule of law.

In a separate article, Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta appealed to all groups who are still carrying illegal weapons to turn them in, because using weapons to kill people would not gain anything. He also appealed to the people if they are scared to return the guns they should contact the international troops, or call him (PM) or the president. "Whoever surrenders their weapons voluntarily there will be no problem but if the International troops find them in the car or in the house they will process them according to law" said Horta. (TP)

Horta asks MPs to find money

In response to the statement of MPs from opposition party that they will not approve the national budget for the fiscal year 2006/2007, Prime Minister Ramos Horta said that if the MP's do not want to approve the budget in the Parliament they should find the money to feed the people. Ramos-Horta further said Members of the Parliament should contribute and approve the budget because the people are waiting for development, infrastructure and other things adding "This budget is our responsibility for this people so MPs should approve it and I have talked to MP's from Fretilin and opposition and they supported me 100%", said Horta (TP)

July 21, 2006

Cause of the crisis is leader's responsibility:
Taur Matan Ruak

Speaking at the funeral service for members F-FDTL

killed during the recent crisis, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak said in order to restore the damage, the leaders must clarify to the population of Timor-Leste the cause and objective of the recent crisis adding the 'responsibilities are in their hands'. Taur appealed to the Timorese people to work hard, cooperate and think that the aim that unites everybody is the nation. Prime Minister Ramos-Horta said events that occurred in the past months in the capital Dili are a big lesson for the political leaders to get rid off weapons and hatred as many Timorese have already lost their lives during 24 years to achieve the independence in 2002 and Timorese should not shoot at each other. He said as a leader and brother he appeals to all to forgive each other and dispose off their weapons and live together as one and contribute to the nation. The Minister added that as a temporary measure the families of the deceased would continue to receive their salaries because they died in service. He also appealed for reconciliation. Present at the ceremony in F-FDTL Head Quarters in Metinaro, were members of the diplomatic corps, commander of the international forces, Mick Slater, representative of GNR, DSRSG Bajawa, Vice-Prime Minister Estanislau da Silva and PNTL representative Julio Hornai. (TP, DN)

MTCR proposes budget of around \$10 million

The Ministry of Labor and Community Reinsertion has presented \$10 million budget for its program.

According to Minister Arsenio Bano, the programs include veterans assistance, professional and capacity building training, job promotion and increases the programs in the social areas specially, for families affected by the recent crisis. Bano stressed that other area of assistance would be school subsidies for about 200 students who have passed their exams adding the proposed budget is to help reduce poverty. (TP)

Dili district tribunal not fully functional

Timor Post reported Friday that Dili District Court is not fully operational as the majority of the national staff is still in the districts. The court is functioning only with the international judges and prosecutors. Some of the court process, especially for the suspects detained by the international forces takes place very late at

night and it's the process is all done by international judges, said a staff who asked to remain anonymous. (TP)

Government is not supporting Alkatiri lawyers:
Pinto

Portugal's Ambassador to Timor-Leste Joao Ramos Pinto said his government has never supported the Portuguese lawyers defending Fretilin's Secretary General, Mari Alkatiri, adding his government does not want to be involved in the problems that occurred in the country. Therefore Pinto asked STL to publish the following denial: The Portuguese Ambassador in Dili repudiates the article published yesterday by this newspaper, titled "Portuguese Government Supports Mari Alkatiri's Team Lawyers". This is a false news and unfortunately it seems to want to put in jeopardy the good name of Portugal and the excellent existing relations between the two people and the two nations. The Portuguese Government had not and will not interfere in any matter of Timor-Leste justice system and all citizens are free to present their defence surrounded by lawyers that they want.. We are certain that this type of information that speaks the truth, in nothing will affect the excellent ties that unite Portugal and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. (STL)

July 20, 2006

288 detained by international forces

The deputy of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice, Silverio Pinto Batista said according to their records, the international forces have detained 288 people, adding out of this number, his office has interviewed 66. Batista said substances such as machete (catana) should not be removed from the people as it is used to facilitate their household work. He added the Provedor's two main tasks with the latest crisis are to focus on the investigation case of 28-29 April 2006 and to monitor the current situation such people detained by police in Caicoli, Becora prison as well as the humanitarian assistance.

The Provedor's Office is working together with different monitoring networks, namely the Justice System Monitoring Program (JSMP) and HAK (human rights) Association.

In a separate article the commander of the forces currently in Timor-Leste, Mick Slater said the international police are discussing the areas to establish five stations in response to concerns of the population to enable them to return to their homes. Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, (19/7) Slater said presently the international forces are providing 24 hours security with police patrolling Dili from dawn to evening and the military throughout the night. He said they are also working with the Ministry of Interior but added it would take a while before the national police start to work in Dili. The Australian commander stressed that one of the difficulties they face is the language skills to enable them to get information from the community adding the community has not reported on who has committed crimes and he knows the Timorese are smart in hiding the weapons, but he hopes the international forces would eventually be able to collect them all. According to Slater, an estimated 5000 weapons have been collected by the forces through operations in Dili.

Suara Timor Lorosae reported Commander Slater as saying there are no indications there would be a protest on Alkatiri's investigation process which started today in Dili and said the international forces are now sharing the security responsibilities, giving more responsibility to the police as the situation is improving. He said the situation in Dili is starting to be normal and the population is carrying on their daily activities even though many people continue to live in the IDP camps. (TP, STL)

Prosecutor general starts questioning Alkatiri

Prosecutor General, Longuinhos Monteiro told the media on Wednesday, the questioning process for former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri starts today (20/7) in relation to allegations of gun distribution to civilians. Monteiro said the International Prosecutor Luis Mota would question Mari Alkatiri, a suspect as per implications by former Interior He also said he believes the former Prime Minister will bow to the law and

follow the process as the decision on the questioning date was a mutual agreement.

Minister. Alkatiri would be accompanied by 9 defence lawyers from overseas. The hearing on the former Interior Minister would be in Dili District Court, said Timor-Leste's Prosecutor General adding the investigation process has been complete and is now under draft accusation. He informed that journalists who wish to attend the interrogation session could do so provided they have a complete ID card for security measures and be in the court by 8:30am.

In a separate article, MP Manuel Tilman, (KOTA) said the presence of international lawyers in Timor-Leste as defence lawyers needs the authorization of the National Parliament.

"According to the law, jurisdictional functions would be allowed if it the law permits then we can contract in the present case. I have not seen a law that allows international lawyers to come and defend a Timorese," said Tilman. He added that according to the Constitution and UNTAET regulations, to become a public defender and defend a citizen in a court one must be a national citizen or Timorese citizen. Tilman is of the opinion that now with the presence of international defence lawyers with former Prime Minister Alkatiri's case is opening up the door so that in future, those Timorese studying law in the country would be valueless. He hopes the lawyers defending Alkatiri cannot exist as the only named,, but also leave the door open to the national lawyers as well, adding, if the international lawyers come to assist the Timorese counselor lawyers that's fine but if they come to take away the Timorese place he disagrees, saying it would be opening a bad page for future generation. (TP)

Mari must be responsible for quarterly budget

MPs from KOTA, PDC and PPT demanded the Cabinet of dismissed Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri be responsible for the quarterly budget report from January to March 2006 which has not yet presented to the National Parliament. MP Clementino dos Reis Amaral (KOTA) said according to the legal mechanism in order to debate a new budget, a report on the old budget is required to determine

the new budget, adding the Mari Alkatiri is responsible for it because he was the Prime Minister during that period. (TP)

July 19, 2006

Australia prime minister's visit to Timor

The Australian Prime Minister on Tuesday paid a 6 hour visit to Timor-Leste where he was welcomed by his Timorese counterpart Jose Ramos-Horta at the airport. Prime Minister Howard then visited the troops stationed at Dili Port where there were a small friction or discrimination as claimed by STL, between the media and the forces for not allowing some journalists into the port upsetting some national and international reporters. In relation to the incident an Australian police said only journalists part of the Prime Minister's delegation from the airport were allowed in as part of security measures.

Prime Minister Howard then proceed to meet Minister Ramos-Horta. The meeting lasted around 1 hour. He then proceeded to meet President Xanana Gusmao Speaking to the media following the meeting President Gusmao said they discussed the current situation of Timor-Leste, the presence of the Australian troops and their role and the steps the country is taking to overcome the current crisis. Mr. Howard then proceeded to UNOTIL to meet DSRSG Anis Bajwa and some members of the UN. Mr. Howard had lunch with the troops in Caicoli before return to Australia at around 15hrs local time.

Diario Nacional reported that President Gusmao was happy following the visit of Australian Prime Minister John Howard saying it was a visit of solidarity and friendship and they discussed the current situation and what is required to further assist the presence of the international troops effectively. The President refused to comment on allegations that some Australian sectors were responsible for the fall of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri saying "We Timorese are conscious of our own situation". According to this daily, upon his arrival at Dili airport, where he was welcomed by his Timorese counterpart John Howard guaranteed

that Timor-Leste can continue to count on the support and friendship of Australia. In the meantime Brigadier General Mick Slater said the situation in Dili is getting better thanks to the joint efforts between the international forces on the ground. On the visit of the Australian Prime Minister, Mick Slater said it was an important occasion as it would boost the troops' morale. (TP, DN)

Opposition parties present electoral law project

The opposition parties, PSD, PD, ASDT and other small parties presented an electoral law project to the National Parliament on Tuesday (18/7) and according to Maria Paixao (PSD) the aim of the document is to establish a law favourable to the majority bench as well as small parties. Paixao said according to her in the past year the majority of the party in the Parliament have been doing everything even though certain things are not correct. MP Rui Menezes (PD) said the project law would establish a law with quality to secure a democratic election and guarantee liberty for all citizens and guarantee political and democratic legitimacy nationally and internationally. He said the document is not a competition with document already presented by the majority bench hoping the two documents can be joined to produce an electoral law with quality. (TP)

World Bank will continue support for new government

The World Bank is prepared to coordinate with donors on their contribution for the second government of Timor-Leste, Acting Country Manager, Laura Bailey told Timor Post on Tuesday (18/7). The World Bank is prepared to continue to support the new government due to the difficulties the population is currently facing and which requires time to overcome the problems.

Bailey said she is happy with the new government because it has plans for many changes. The bank will continue to support the National Parliament, civil society and the President's office. She hopes the government would call the donors included the World Bank to sit together to discuss and listen to the needs of Timor-Leste current government, adding all the donors countries are willing to contribute to the government. (TP)

July 18, 2006

Portuguese government supports Alkatiri's lawyers

The Portuguese government is strongly supporting the team of lawyers defending the former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, reported STL Tuesday.

According to this daily correspondent's investigation in Lisbon, the team supported by the government of Portugal is aimed to stopping Mari from being imprisoned on allegations of guns distribution to civilians, adding each lawyer would cost around 1500-2000 euros per interview.

Five lawyers would cost around 7000-10,000 euros without including accommodation, transport and other expenses. The cost would not be paid by Fretilin but by the Portuguese government, financing the law firms Joao Galvao Telles, Joao Soares and Associates, Jose Antonio Barreiros and Associates. The lawyers defending Alkatiri arrived in Dili on Monday.

(STL)

Approval of budget depends on plans

The President of the National Parliament, Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres said the budget will only be approved when the Parliament receives plans from the new government on how to implement it. Guterres said the dismissed government already had a proposed budget to be implemented but he has no idea what the new government budget is like.

In a separate article he said he disagrees with the extraordinary congress as proposed by Grupu Mudansa Fretilin/ Fretilin Group for Change, saying that he was elected in the recent party congress using the voting system of show of hands.

Cristo Rei residents complain against forces

A group of Cristo Rei population, which covers the area of Becusi, Becora reportedly said they paid a visit to President Gusmao to present their complaints about the search operation by the intervention forces in Becora. According Ermelinda

Pinto, the group's spokesperson, on 14 July the intervention forces did a search operation on information received about guns, a grenade, pistols and other light weapons hidden in that area. She said they searched the house including inside the grounded maize but did not find anything, but 11 people were detained including her son who had arrived on the same day from the sub-district of Lakloho. They continue under detention and only one person has been released. (STL)

Prosecutor general and deputy sworn-in

Prosecutor General, Longuinhos Monteiro and his deputy, Ivo Valente were sworn-in on Monday in the Palace of Ashes despite efforts by the majority party MPs to restructure the Republic Prosecutor's General reported Timor Post.

According to this newspaper the efforts indicated the MPs wanted to get rid of the Prosecutor General in relation to the crime accusations involving Fretilin leaders namely Rogerio Lobato and Mari Alkatiri. Speaking at the ceremony President Gusmao said the necessity for the courts to function with capacity, liberty and independence is fundamental for the survival of democracy of a sovereign state. President Gusmao stressed no one should be above the law, noting "we have been verifying in the last year, the law is greatly applicable to the common citizen, poor citizen, to the citizen who that lacks knowledge of the laws we produce". On his part, Longuinhos Monteiro said he would act independently.

On the same occasion, President Gusmao asked the government to reform the PNTL with the aim to develop it into a professional institution, reported STL. The Minister of Interior, Alcino Barris also told the media, the Public Ministry must be supported therefore the restructure of PNTL would be crucial to develop a strong and professional police force to fully support the Public ministry. (STL, TP)

Population is not planning to protest

The spokesperson for the National Forum for Unity and Justice, Eduardo de Deus Barreto, alias Dusae, said the population of Ermera does not have plans to hold a demonstration in Dili to dissolve the

Parliament, reported Timor Post. Barreto said they have put their trust and are giving time to the President of the Republic and the new Prime Minister and to other members of the government to carry their work for the nation. They would like the government to pay attention to the people affected by recent crisis. He said they do not want the dissolution of the Parliament out of respect of RDTL Constitution which has been written with the blood and bones and any process must be followed according to law and order. Eduardo Barreto further said there are civilians in Ermera District still in possession of guns and using it to terrorize the population in that area. (TP)

July 15, 2006

biggest problem is reconciliation: Gusmao

Speaking to the media following the swearing-in of the second constitutional government, President Gusmao reportedly said the new cabinet has a big task ahead of them and there will be various obstacles as the sovereign body would have to look into the difficulties that emerged in the past, stressing, reconciliation is one of the biggest problems even though Timor-Leste has had history of reconciliation experience. The President added it would be a burden requiring the efforts of everybody. He said, "reconciliation cannot achieve without the truth and the truth would be meaningless without justice". Without further explaining how justice would be defended, Xanana Gusmao told the media he would like the new government to work harder on the economy of the country to progress on to the election in order to enable the people to elect who they trust can improve their living conditions, noting elections is the best option to resolve the crisis through pacific measures.

He also reminded the new government about the continued suffering of the people, to create better conditions for the youths in terms of employment and the resolve the veterans situation. In reply to the demands by the National Front for Justice and Peace and some other groups for the

dissolution of the Parliament and the Government, in relation with the recent crisis, President Gusmao said as Head of the State he has been putting all efforts not to touch the Constitution to avoid it as a practice in Timor-Leste in future and reiterated the new government continue to respect the structures of the Parliament. A total of 40 members of the second constitutional government participated in the swearing-in ceremony on Friday.

In a separate article, Andre L4, representing 300 former Falintil members asked Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Jose Ramos-Horta whether they would be classified as rebel or not since they assist the armed forces at the request of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and F-FDTL Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Coronel Lere Anan to provide security and stability for the nation. (TP)

Members of old cabinet not legitimate

MP Joao Goncalves reportedly said the second government is not constitutional because its leadership remains more or less the same.

According to Goncalves, PSD sees no difference in the method used to select the new government as President Gusmao himself declared Fretilin party illegitimate for breaking the political party's rules by a show of hands vote. He further said all the parties were not consulted on the new government noting it is a failure of the President of Republic and that's the reason PSD did not participate in the swearing-in ceremony. In a separate article it is reported a meeting was held on Friday between President Gusmao, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, Minister of Interior, Dili District Administrators, Heads of villagers and youth groups with the aim to secure peace and find a solution to persuade the IDP's to return to their home. They discussed reconciliation and the probability of a justice process for the population to be able to forgive each other as a step to leave the camps as well as for the heads of villages together with community police and youths coordinators to provide vigilance for the people to live without disturbances specially at night.

On Saturday Timor Post reported a bus was attacked by unknown group travelling in a car (Kijang) with

iron bars and light weapons in Lecidere. According to an eyewitness, name not provided, the bus, had stopped there for while and probably waiting for passengers to Baucau.

The incident left the bus with broken rear and side windows and occurred at around 2pm. (TP)

Group prepares for extraordinary congress

Fretilin's Group for Change/Grupo Mudansa Fretilin (GMF) held a preliminary meeting on Saturday in Dili to prepare for the extraordinary congress. Members from 13 districts were present at the meeting. According to Vicente Maubocy, a member of GMF, the exact date for the extraordinary congress will be confirmed in two weeks. Maubody further stated the congress has the total support of the majority of the party.

Another member of the group, Vitor da Costa emphasized the aim of the congress is to improve the image of Fretilin.

Aderito de Jesus, a member of the GMF reportedly said he is prepared to be one of the lawyers for Railos's group noting there would be up to five lawyers working on Railos case. (TP, STL, DN)

New government can stop the crisis

The Bishop of Dili Diocese, Don Alberto Ricardo da Silva, reportedly said the new government can stop the crisis in the new nation. "Today (Friday 14/7) in the swearing-in of the new ministers of the new government we feel there is will to improve everything and move forward, to stop the big crisis which emerged in our country. As of today we have hope the new government would overcome the crisis of the nation," Bishop Ricardo told the media Friday. The Bishop also added "we must continue to help each other to carry on the good work for our country. The church wants the truth and justice. If we follow on this I think it would be better. But if we leave out these two things then we have problems".

Some old cabinet not part of new government

The second Constitutional Government does not include some members of the old cabinet, namely Ovidio de Jesus, Ministers of Transport and Armindo Maia, Minister of Education who resigned during the crisis and were not invited by Ramos-Horta to be part of the new government. All the Secretaries of State remain the same except for Egidio de Jesus, Secretary of State for Region III who is likely to be assigned as an ambassador, at the new Prime Minister request. The new ministers are for Foreign Affairs, Transport and Telecommunications and Education. Josi Luis Guterres, Timor-Leste Ambassador to the United Nations and Washington is the new Foreign Affairs Minister and was unable to participate in the swearing-in and would do so only a week time, Ramos-Horta told the media Thursday. He further told the media he would meet with the Council of Ministers following the ceremony. (see details below of the second constitutional government) (STL)

F-FDTL and PNTL should not fall into manipulations

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta has appealed to PNTL and F-FDTL not to fall into tentative manipulations to divide the people of Timor-Leste by villages, race, ethnicity or language, adding there is no such thing as east or west but one big family from Timor-Leste. Ramos-Horta stressed in order for the country to move forward with prosperity the people must work together in strengthening unity and should not keep hatred, as it would stop the nation from moving forward.

He further added the two institutions must gain consciousness in order to forget their divisionism. "If you want to contribute for this nation with pride as Timorese then you must throw away hatred, revenge, and practice of divisionism. All your contributions would enable these two institutions to be successful," Ramos-Horta said. The Minister said a study is currently in place to better develop PNTL in traffic and community policing, adding the international forces will also work with the Timorese police officers in security operations.

He added now that the new Government is in place it would maintain an eye on the two institutions and

under the guidance of the President of the Republic, the Government would work together with the two Deputy Prime Ministers on how to maintain a closer work with PNTL. The Minister also announced that F-FDTL veterans currently receiving US\$100 a month would receive up to US\$300 when they retire.

In a separate article it is reported PNTL in Bobonaro District continue to work to provide security to the population. (STL, TP)

F-FDTL And PNTL should be under one ministry

In a letter addressed to the President of the Republic by Lino da Silva Saldanha representing the 'Grupo Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste/Timor-Leste National Police Group and spokesperson for internal security reformation, asked that those police who have fled the Headquarters not to use big weapons and pistols for security purposes. Saldanha also asked "in future PNTL should not use big weapons and pistols to maintain law and order". He is of the opinion PNTL leadership in future should be under the supervision of the veterans because they have shown through their sacrifices in the last 24 years, national interest priorities and national unity. Saldanha also said PNTL officers who have done wrong must be dismissed from the institution and be punished and for those who have left and were not at wrong according to justice should rejoin the police force. He further said the Unidade Reserva Police (URP and Unidade Policia Fronteira (UPF) should no longer exist, adding PNTL and F-FDTL should only be under one ministry. (STL)

July 13, 2006

Xanana pushes Horta for military reform

President Xanana Gusmao pushes Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta for military reformation and PNTL to prevent conflict among them. Xanana also asks Horta to lead the government for better governance until next election. Xanana told the media that "The government must find the way to reform PNTL and F-FDTL with high professionalism within their

intuitions. The decisions have to be made by one commander" said Xanana. He further explains that F-FDTL is owned by the nation not individual or any by political party. MP from Democratic Party (PD) Juliao Mausiri stated that F-FDTL have to show their professionalism as a force of state not own by political party.

"Anyone who wants to be a member of PNTL or F-FDTL should not be influenced by any political party but understand their mission that they are owned by the state to defend the nation and its people" said Mausiri. (STL, TP)

Horta would not follow his promises

President of UDT party, Joao Viegas Carrascalao said that the promises made by the new Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta would not happen because they're not realistic in the crisis situation.

"The PM has made no preparation to implement his program in short time but he made lots of promises" said Carrascalao. In response to Carrascalao statement, president of ASDT party Francisco Xavier do Amaral said that he fully supports the program of Prime Minister Ramos Horta because he believes Horta can implement it.

"We have to move on and we cannot just listen to the rumours to stop the government's program for development in this country" he told TP reporters at National Parliament house.

Electoral law will kill small parties

MP from UDT Party Alexandre Cortereal told the media at National Parliament that electoral law proposed by Fretilin government will kill the small parties in the country because the article 13 only allows 5% vote to have seats in the parliament. "It means to get one seat in the parliament one has to get 20.000 voters" said Cortereal. He further stated that the small political parties would find hard to get 5% of vote so there will be no democracy in this country. (STL)

Railos group hands over guns

A ceremony was held yesterday in Liquica soccer field, a town 30 kilometres west of Dili, for the hand over of guns by Vicente "Railos" da Conceicao and his group in the presence of Prime Minister Josi Ramos-Horta, Bishop of Dili Dom Ricardo da Silva, Baucau Diocese representative, Fr. Martinho Gusmao, Prosecutor General, Longuinhos Monteiro, Commander PNTL Paulo de Fatima Martins, Major Tara, former Lieutenant Salsinha Gastao, members of the Parliament and diplomatic corps and the local population totalling about 1,000. The population welcomed Prime Minister Ramos-Horta with traditional dances in that district. Eleven guns were handed over to the new Prime Minister and according to Railos, four weapons were taken by F-FDTL during the shooting in Tasitolu. Another three were handed over by Major Tara in Ermera. Speaking at the ceremony, Railos reiterated that his group had been armed by Rogerio Lobato in May with the knowledge of Mari Alkatiri. Also speaking at the ceremony, Bishop Ricardo stressed that the handing over of guns is a sign that people value life. He appealed to other groups with guns to follow Railos' example. In a separate article, Longuinhos Monteiro stated the he received the guns handed over by Railos group which would be used as evidence in the court process. (STL,TP)

Changes of procurement directors

Addressing the nation on the national television, President Xanana Gusmao pointed to many concerns the country is still facing and areas in which the new government must make changes to improve the services. Among them is a change of the directors in the procurement and tender department. The President points out that it would also stop accusations that the directors are collecting money for their party and avoid numerous other alleged questionable practices. (TP)

Hasegawa hands report to Prime Minister Horta

SRSG Hasegawa on Tuesday presented a report on transparency and accountability to Prime Minister Ramos-Horta with the aim of helping the new government win the trust and confidence of the citizens, he said. SRSG also said Prime Minister Ramos-Horta has indicated he will prioritize measures of transparency and accountability in his

administration and wants the international community to assist in strengthening capacity in the Provedor's Office and Prosecutor's General's Office. He added that the Inspector General should keep an eye out for abuses of power and corruption practices. The report is based on recommendations from experts from the UN, Finland, World Bank, UN Development Program in April 2006.

July 11, 2006

Ramos-Horta government is illegal: PD

In a press communique, the President and Secretary General of Partido Democratico (PD) 'considers the new government unconstitutional if it is a continuation of the first government of Mari Alkatiri,' reported Suara Timor Lorosae Tuesday. PD also considers the nomination of Ramos-Horta as the new Prime Minister and his two deputies, Estandislau Aleixo da Silva and Rui Maria Arazjo by President Xanana Gusmao also illegal for not consulting other political parties represented in the National Parliament as per RDTL Constitution title IV, chapter II, Article 106. According to PD the new government is molded from a party involved in serious crisis. The communique states that the former ministers and the political party government no longer has the credibility to form a transitional government due to its lack legality and credibility as stated by the President of the Republic himself. PD is of the opinion the structure of the emergency government should be small and efficient with important function to assist in urgently resolving the social humanitarian problem, stability, justice and prepare for the general elections. The government, model presented by PD, based on the current crisis consist of 3 ministries. Ministry for Social Issues (health, education, economy and other matters) Ministry of Political Affairs (defence, internal and external security) and Ministry of Justice.

In a separate article Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres reportedly said the second government still is from Fretilin since it won with the majority of the vote and it is up to the party to choose the

person to the head the government just like the case of Ramos-Horta. Guterres added the nomination of Ramos-Horta is with the aim to stabilize the situation and respond to the current crisis. He added the new Prime Minister has agreed to have a weekly meeting regarding the government's program, noting the present government will give continuation to the first government headed by Mari Alkatiri. (STL, TP)

Parliament receives letter from family members of PNTL casualties

Family members of PNTL casualties related to the events of May 25 sent a letter to the President of the National Parliament, Mr. Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres and read by the Parliament's Permanent Secretariat during yesterday's (10/7) plenary session, asks the UN to investigate those responsible for the shootings of the police officers. The families also want clarification to the public on the disarmament of PNTL only and not F-FDTL who were armed and shot the officers.

They also ask the UN to look after the wounded ones, the orphans and widows and raise a monument in memory of those who died under the UN flag. A copy of the letter was sent to the President of the Republic, President of the Court of Appeals, Prime Minister and the Bishops of Dili and Baucau. (STL)

July 7, 2006

Horta an acceptable candidate: Goncalves

MP Joao Goncalves reportedly said his party has presented their opinion that Ramos-Horta would be the acceptable candidate to carry the government until the elections in 2007. Goncalves added that all the opposition parties have no objection to Ramos-Horta to take care of the government considering that Fretilin should nominate someone to fill the Prime Minister's position but the President of the Republic has the last word. (TP)

IDP's will soon return home: Slater

The commander of the joint task force in Timor-Leste, Brigadier General Michael Slater reportedly told the media on Thursday that those whose houses were not burnt, would soon return to their homes. Slater said the UN police would come in big numbers from Malaysia and Australia and will guarantee security to the whole population in Dili. "When the UN police arrive, they will patrol the suburbs. This is an important step to help the Timorese to live in peace," said the Australian Brigadier General. According to Timor Post, Slater said the UN Police will soon arrive and all IDPs will be able to return to their residence. (TP)

Risk facing health services: Araujo

The Minister of Health, Rui Araujo reportedly said during a press conference held on Thursday that his Ministry would face difficulties regarding the current expenditures if the budget for the fiscal year 2006/2007 is not approved.

Araujo also stressed the Ministry would risk ceasing its services in a few weeks if there is no budget to maintain the daily operations. He added the current activities are being funded from last year's budget which the ministry did not fully implement in the month of May and June due to the national crisis that occurred. (TP)

July 6, 2006

Alfredo meets President Gusmao

Military police commander, Major Alfredo and his group reportedly met President Gusmao at his office on Wednesday for over one hour but issues discussed was not revealed. According to Suara Timor Lorosae (STL), Major Alfredo avoided the media by leaving through the back door of the Presidential Palace. The group was accompanied by the international forces on return to their camp in Maubisse.

In the meantime, Major Tara and Major Marcos Tilman together with 12 others handed in their guns to the Australian forces in Gleno, Ermera District on Wednesday. (STL,TP)

ASDT supports Horta for premiership

Associaçao Social Democrata Timorenses (ASDT) fully endorses Minister Ramos-Horta to become the Prime Minister due to his credibility not only among the population but within the international community as well, said ASDT President, Francisco Amaral. Amaral stressed that the country needs a person with leadership that can take the people and the nation forwards into prosperity.

Timor Post reported the Minister Ramos-Horta as saying that he would consult with Fretilin Central Committee regarding his possible take over of the post of Prime Minister. (STL, TP)

Fretilin approaches Catholic Church

A delegation of Fretilin members, headed by Deputy Secretary-General Jose Reis on Tuesday met with the Bishop of Baucau Diocese, Mgr. Basilio do Nascimento. During the meeting, the delegation presented their point of view and concerns on the current situation. On the same occasion, Bishop Basilio appealed to all to be united on taking the state forwards. Jose Reis said the meeting was an initiative from Fretilin following the national congress to create a stronger partnership with the Catholic Church of Baucau and Dili Dioceses. He also said a step towards a solution to the current political crisis was the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri and Fretilin's efforts to support the forming of an interim government that will persuade the people to return to their homes and encourage the disarmament of civilians who still have guns. On the same occasion, Bishop Basilio expressed his concerns about the people still living in the camps and would like Fretilin to help find a solution to end their suffering. The Bishop also recommends that the leaders form a unity starting from the base up, pointing out that it must start at the village level. He said there must first be reconciliation with the community elders in the villages as per Timorese tradition followed by the state. The church, he said, would become the eyewitness or institutional instrument to strengthening the unity.

In a separate article, Fretilin Renovator Group continues to ask Fretilin Central Committee to consult and resolve the mistake they committed by holding an extraordinary meeting, reported STL

Thursday. Egidio de Jesus reportedly said a member of the group already approached Estanislau da Silva, Fretilin congress organizer to sit and resolve the crisis within the party adding that if the extraordinary congress is not held, he and his group will take the process to a court.

July 4, 2006

Alkatiri wants to distance himself from justice

President of Associacao Social Democrata Timorese (ASDT) Francisco Xavier de Amaral reportedly said former Prime Minister Alkatiri wants to distance himself from justice in relation to the recent problems in Timor-Leste.

Amaral stresses that since Alkatiri was the head of the government, he must be responsible for the incidents of April 28 for giving orders to F-FDTL and to take full control of the situation and for the allegations of guns distribution to civilians. He added that if Alkatiri resumes the post as Member of Parliament, he would be entitled to immunity and therefore he would never be charged for the problems under his government.

"The return of Alkatiri to the National Parliament is like a camouflage so that the police and the international forces cannot detain Alkatiri. I see it as a maneuver by Fretilin not to resolve the problem that occurred,' said the President of ASDT. In the meantime, MP Cipriana Pereira (Fretilin) said until Mari Alkatiri is proven guilty or innocent following allegations of crimes against the population and the nation, he has the right to resume the post as MP.

Pereira stressed that everybody wants justice to prevail and hold accountable those responsible for the events that led to the crisis but it has to be achieved through an investigation. (STL)

Xanana visits F-FDTL training centre

President Xanana Gusmao and Minister Jose Ramos-Horta paid a visit to F-FDTL Headquarters in Metinaro on Monday where they met with Armed

Forces officials for more than one hour. According to Suara Timor Lorosae (STL), the agenda of the meeting was not disclosed to the media and the presence of President Gusmao called the attention of the majority of the IDP's in that area who welcomed and waved to him but for others it was an opportunity to express their ill feelings for the President by calling him a liar and traitor for not yet resolving the crisis of the nation. (STL)

Local government activities

Despite the recent crisis, the local government activities continue in the District of Viqueque, reported STL Tuesday. According to the District Administrator, Francisco da Silva, the education, health and public security continue to function as normal. Last Thursday he inaugurated a primary school in Lacluta, and stressed he would hold discussions with community leaders of that area regarding the situation in Dili as the population is starting to be get concerned with their own security, education and health. Da Silva appealed to the people of Viqueque to carry on with their daily business and assured them that the situation in Dili was up to the national government to resolve. Those responsible for the education sector for Viqueque appealed to students who have fled Dili to participate in the local classes.

In a separate article, it is reported that the Administration of Bobonaro District has not been functional for the past two months because the office keys have not been handed over and the Administrator, the Deputy and the Secretary for Region IV until now continue to be in Dili. MP Jose Andrade said although the local government is non-functional, other government sectors such as health, police, fire brigade, education and agriculture continue with their daily activities.

Andrade said prior to their departures to Dili, the protesters tried to dissolve the local government by taking the keys and locking the doors of the local administration office to stop the public servants from going to work. He also said the reason for the absence of the main government heads is due to threats made to them.

He appeals to the coordinator of the protesters from Bobonaro to return the keys to the Administrator office to enable the local

government to operate. (STL)

July 3, 2006

Longuinhos request parliament to strip immunity rights

Prosecutor General, Longuinhos Monteiro, will write to the National Parliament to request that MP Mari Alkatiri be stripped off the immunity rights to follow the justice process in relation to allegations of guns distribution to civilians, reported Suara Timor Lorosae (STL) on Monday. Speaking during a press conference held on Friday at his office, Monteiro said he is aware of the former Prime Minister's intention to return to the Parliament as an MP adding "we cannot make a decision without seeking the opinion of the National Parliament but we will send a letter to the NP and wait to see whether he automatically gets immunity and if so we the Parliament would have to make a decision to remove him of the immunity". He added that the Public Ministry called Alkatiri for questioning or a revision audience due to implications by Rogirio Lobato who said Alkatiri was aware of the groups that received guns illegally. The Prosecutor-General says that although Parliament is not functioning at the moment, it is their legal duty to inform the Parliament. In the meantime, the President of the National Parliament, Francisco Gutierrez, reportedly said they would look into the case the Prosecutor-General has already started. (STL)

Fretilin president calls for peace and stability

Fretilin President, Francisco Lu'Olo' Guterres appeals to the population and members of his party to contribute to peace and stability of the nation. In his message through a press conference on Friday, Guterres said the Timorese people are suffering and living in fear and many have fled their homes and living a distance from their loved ones without knowing their future, therefore he appeals for everybody to contribute for peace and stability in Timor-Leste. "As a president of Fretilin, I appealed to all Fretilin militants to reach out to each other and work together to solve

the crisis that occurred in our country" said Lu Olo. He also appealed to the civilians who are carrying weapons to hand them over to the international troops and other competent authorities. (STL)

False detention photograph

Fretilin's leaders have said that the photo showing an Australian Force detaining former Prime Minister Alkatiri in Dili is false.

According to STL, Fretilin leaders have said the photo was a montage done by a small group and distributed in Dili saying the international forces have detained Mari Alkatiri. The pamphlet was directly handed to Fretilin leaders by the Australian forces. "This false photograph is the intention of a group or individual to damage the dignity of Mari Alkatiri and Fretilin, to create instability in our country and to create confusion and deceit among the population and is trying to damage the political dialogue process which the Fretilin is holding to improve the current situation crisis," said Alkatiri during a press conference Saturday (1/7), adding Fretilin demands responsibility of the group or individuals who are distributing these false photos and try to deceive the Timorese people.

Xanana ready to go to prison again

President Xanana Gusmao told FRETILIN supporters at Friday's rally that he was ready to go to prison if he was involved in arming civilians.

"We are waiting for the International Investigation Team to do the investigation and if Xanana Gusmao is involved, then I am ready to go to prison again" said Gusmao. He further explained that the current crisis started because of discrimination issues within F-FDTL and the government had no political good will to solve their problem.

MP from Fretilin Party Antonio Cardoso told the crowd that Fretilin rejected the dissolution of the National Parliament. "If the president dissolves the parliament, it is against RDTL constitution and Fretilin still has a mandate until 2007".

The deputy secretary-general of Fretilin, Jose Maria Reis, handed a petition addressed to president Xanana Gusmao and demanded that he not dissolve the parliament.

President of Fretilin party, Francisco Guterres Lu-Olo, appealed in his address to the nation and the Fretilin militants to "restore peace and stability in the country again" because the nation is facing a difficult situation which has caused fear among the people. "As a president of Fretilin, I appeal to all Fretilin militants to reach out to each other and work together to solve the crisis that has occurred in our country" said Lu Olo. He also appealed to the civilians who are carrying weapons to hand them over to the international troops and other competent authorities. (STL)

OPINION & ANALYSIS

What next for Timor?

Online Opinion - July 24, 2006

Jeremy Ballenger — With the present situation slowly heading for political resolution, time has come to consider the next steps for the fledgling government of Australia's newest neighbour.

Many theorists and commentators argue development in Timor is inexorably linked to GNP growth. This argument stresses successful development will not occur without increases in income levels, leaving us wondering how Timor can have a hope of pulling an economic rabbit out of the development hat. With the ongoing debacle that is the Timor Sea agreement, increases in real income will take time to trickle down, if they do at all: time that Timor does not have if it is to avoid a return to the recent unrest.

How can this be achieved in a country arguably verging on being penniless? The Timorese parliament is in the process of passing a US\$415 million budget, which to use the words of former Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta equates to being "the budget of a university or a small town in Australia".

Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen offers

the first steps to a solution in his 1998 book *Development as Freedom*. Using what is described as a support-led process to deliver "social opportunities" — health care and basic education — Sen argues there is no need to wait for dramatic increases in real incomes.

In relation to Timor, the primary aim should be to improve the quality of life for a populace subsisting on approximately US\$1 a day. According to conventional development wisdom, this requires money and resources, and this very fact supports the argument that incomes must rise before these essential services can be delivered to the people. Quite often, this argument is extended, with theorists advocating a complete postponement until capital becomes available for governmental social investment. Chicken first, egg follows.

At this point it seems an insuperable problem. What about the economics of relative costs? By their very nature, social services such as those the Timorese desperately need are labour intensive in their provision. In a country with an average wage of less than a dollar, these services are relatively inexpensive to provide.

There might be less money, but existing wage levels mean Timor doesn't need as much money to provide such labour intensive services. Simply put, it costs a great deal less than delivering similar services in the developed world of trade unions and "living wages". Ergo, there's no need to wait.

With support-led initiatives laying the foundation for the more popular income-led growth, this approach should be given serious consideration. Other income and business-led initiatives have not fared particularly well. Take coffee as an example.

Fairtrade, Oxfam, Community Aid Abroad and even USAID and CNN have trumpeted the delights of Timorese coffee far and wide, with cafes charging us a premium to savour the deliciously sweet taste. More than a few pundits have argued coffee, along with oil and gas will lead to Timorese economic regeneration. Oil and gas aside, to date coffee has failed to deliver. It's time we recognised the failure of coffee to save the day is for sound economic reasons.

Coffee is not scarce. Paraphrasing economist Tim Harford, coffee is grown all over the world and requires hard work but little skill to produce. Further complicating matters is trade in raw coffee is relatively free of economic barriers, subjecting it to unadulterated free-market forces. The lack of tariff or subsidy protection also makes it unattractive to farmers in developed countries, leaving coffee and other commodities like rice to the world's poor to cultivate.

Coffee is also an easy business to get into, and initiatives like Fairtrade only make it more attractive to poor people looking to feed themselves. Such initiatives warm the hearts of developed world philanthropists and ethical consumers, but only benefit a small group of coffee producers.

The point is the existence of Fairtrade and like initiatives does not alter a very important fact — globally, too much coffee is being produced. As much as we all like the stuff, it is quite clear that on these facts alone successful Timorese economic development on the husk of a coffee bean is about as likely as them qualifying for the next World Cup.

Alternatives to coffee, oil and gas are needed. While not advocating the demise of the coffee industry, the relative economics mentioned earlier suggest several other areas for development that efficiently leverage lower relative wage levels and the use of labour intensive industry.

Leaving aside healthcare and energy, possible alternatives meeting these requirements include commercial fishing, aquaculture and agriculture. All also have the added benefit of scalability.

Although horribly devastated during the Indonesian withdrawal, Timor's natural environment is breathtaking both on and offshore. The island is situated on the precipice of a 3.5km deep channel in the Wetar Strait, home to tuna, deepwater snapper and a vast array of marine life continually refreshing the coastal marine environment.

A key infrastructure aspect not destroyed by retreating Indonesian and militias is deepwater ports. The northern coast of East Timor is well

serviced by excellent deepwater facilities, initially designed to cater for Indonesian warships. With this infrastructure largely intact, minimal investment would be required for these facilities to support a commercial fishing industry. Fishing and the subsequent packing and export are labour intensive and thereby low cost, making it hard to ignore.

Agricultural alternatives to coffee are also necessary. That the world's poor wind up farming our coffee and rice is inarguable. Little known is that rice paddies have an alternative use in aquaculture as hatcheries for fish farming. Work has begun in this area assisted by UN Volunteers and the Department of Fisheries and the Marine Environment (DFME) but further government and development investment is necessary, providing both economic and health benefits.

Malaria is endemic in East Timor. During the wet season, rice paddies become breeding grounds for the malaria mosquito. Integrated farming methods like aquaculture provide fish to eat mosquito larvae, an economically efficient step toward lessening the over 130,000 malaria cases treated in East Timorese hospitals each year.

Another option is vanilla. An alternative cash crop to coffee, vanilla has comparable inputs and labour intensity to farm, and the economics are hard to ignore. Coffee yields four times as much crop per acre, but on price, vanilla yields deliver a return over six times larger to the farmer even with historically low vanilla prices. More simply — raw coffee prices per kilogram are about US\$2 on a good day. On a bad day, vanilla is worth US\$50 per kilogram. An investment in expansion of this crop magnifies the return to the economy and increases the pace of development.

There will of course be understandable resistance to the growth of Timorese commercial fishing, aquaculture and agricultural industries, especially when they compete for export dollars with Australian business. Nobody likes competition.

But Australian industry must face the reality that this is an unavoidable eventuality. To deny or resist moves to boost East Timor's economic growth invites a much less palatable outcome — the

continued need for Australian soldiers and police keeping the peace in an impoverished neighbouring state.

Conspiracy theory haunts East Timor

The Australian - July 15, 2006

Mark Dodd and Stephen Fitzpatrick in Jakarta — On his first day in office this week, East Timor's new Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta accepted a cache of illegal weapons from a former soldier, Vincente "Railos" da Conceicao.

Conceicao had become something of a household name as the man who fingered East Timor's former interior minister for allegedly arming hit squads to target enemies of former prime minister Mari Alkatiri, a claim that ultimately helped force Alkatiri out.

Conceicao handed over 11 Heckler and Koch submachine guns to Australian troops. But no ammunition was surrendered and the rebel and his colleagues walked away still armed with stolen police-issue Glock 9mm pistols tucked in their pants.

It was a piece of theatre that threw up more questions than answers about East Timor's low-rent version of a people power uprising.

Claims of hit squads, foreign conspiracies, missing guns and bodies all underscore the murky nature of East Timor's crisis, a political quagmire that sucked in a reluctant Canberra as rioting and violence erupted through Dili, forcing residents into refugee camps as their homes were burned. The political demise of Alkatiri was, for the most part, self-inflicted, a legacy of a leader and an administration increasingly out of touch with its grassroots. But was it an internal coup?

Certainly Alkatiri's old enemy President Xanana Gusmao and his ally of convenience Ramos Horta displayed deft political footwork. And the flames of discontent surrounding Alkatiri were given

oxygen by some timely revelations from the Australian media and almost nightly appearances by Ramos Horta on the ABC's Lateline, a program Alkatiri snubbed several times.

The events that sealed Alkatiri's political fate began on January 11 with a protest about regional discrimination by a group of soldiers born in the western region. Alkatiri quickly lost control, leaving the government paralysed, Dili in flames, ethnic cleansing in the suburbs and more than 30 killed, 150,000 people displaced and the country on the brink of civil war. Calm was only restored with the arrival of an Australian-led force in May.

Behind the events lies a shadowy assortment of self-proclaimed patriots. Their close links with the President and their role in the political vacuum finally tipped the scales against Alkatiri.

Amid calls for calm by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a desperate fight for political supremacy was waged between Gusmao and Alkatiri.

Alkatiri issued a statement on May 27 trying to make out he was still in charge. "The international forces have been receiving instructions from the government," he said. "At no time has the government ceased to work. What is in motion is an attempt to stage a coup d'etat."

But first blood went to Gusmao, who invoked emergency powers and stripped the prime minister of his authority. He wanted to sack him but was advised that would need the full support of his Council of State.

Alkatiri clung to power for three more weeks before finally caving in on June 26, five days after receiving another presidential demand to resign, this time accompanied by a video copy of ABC allegations that he had supported the arming of civilians.

There is no doubt Alkatari, a Muslim not trusted by many in the predominantly Catholic country, and Gusmao, worshipped as a national hero for his role with the gun and then diplomacy in winning the country its independence, do not like each other. But whether there was an organised conspiracy to depose Alkatiri — possibly with Canberra's

blessing — is unclear.

Certainly, Australian ministers have striven to avoid the appearance of taking sides, despite heeding the plea from Ramos Horta and Gusmao for peacekeeping troops that was, in effect, a rebuke to Alkatiri and his government. Portugal, East Timor's formal colonial ruler and a close friend of Alkatiri, last month all but accused Australia of trying to interfere, offering a stark warning.

"Australia should not get involved in the domestic affairs of East Timor. Neither Australia, nor Portugal," Portugal's foreign minister Diego Freitas do Amaral said five days before he resigned.

Conceicao and his hit squad appear to be pivotal to the entire question of whether there were secret forces working against Alkatiri. Before he stepped into the limelight during an ABC Four Corners program last month, few East Timorese had heard of Conceicao.

His startling claim that he and his ex-guerilla cohorts had been armed and trained with the knowledge of Alkatiri and then-interior minister Rogerio Lobato effectively cruelled Alkatiri's chances of hanging on through the crisis.

Sitting on the shady veranda of his Liquica home this week, the rebel leader tells Inquirer that he and two deputies, Mateus "Rakat" dos Santos Pereira and Liandro "Grey" Lobato, were taken by Rogerio Lobato to meet Alkatiri at the latter's house on May 8. Liandro Lobato is a village head in Liquica district.

Conceicao says the 30-minute meeting in the upmarket Dili suburb of Farol was largely a test, for Alkatiri to decide whether he trusted the group with the "security" task Lobato had set them the previous day. "We talked mostly about the current political situation in East Timor," says Conceicao, who is a member of Alkatiri's Fretilin party.

They discussed overcoming opposition in East Timor to Alkatiri and how this could be done. "Towards the end he said, 'The President must not know and police chief Paulo Martins must not know. This is top secret,'" Conceicao claims.

Conceicao and his two lieutenants concur on the detail of this last statement, and Conceicao adds: "Anyone who says Paulo Martins is responsible for this is wrong. He is not the one who allowed the police weapons to disappear." Rogerio Lobato, he alleges, bore that responsibility. Lobato has been under house arrest since last month and, according to prosecutor-general Longhuinos Monteiro, may have implicated Alkatiri in the scandal.

Conceicao says he accepted the task "because there was no option not to, but also because I wanted to see how far he was prepared to go". He says it was a clash on May 24 with national defence force (F-FDTL) soldiers at Tibar, just west of Dili, resulting in the loss of four lives, that made him decide it was time to go public with what he had been asked to do.

Interestingly, all sides blame this particular encounter for the sharp deterioration of affairs over the next day or so, including the massacre of 12 unarmed policemen in Dili by F-FDTL soldiers on May 25. "It was because the F-FDTL, when they saw the dead members of the Railos group were carrying PNTL (police) rifles, decided to get revenge," Ramos Horta said this week. "They thought they were being attacked by PNTL."

Other key players have explained events the same way. Conceicao is a former Falintil guerilla commander who has the devotion of his men. His colleagues Liandro Lobato and Pereira, when asked whether they felt they had an option not to join in the hit-squad plan, dismissed the idea. "Our decision was to support Railos," says Pereira, who describes himself as an entrepreneur with interests in construction.

"Whatever he decides to do, we follow." Conceicao says he joined the regular army after Indonesia left East Timor in 1999, but retired in 2004 "because I didn't like the discipline". He took up farming — mostly rice, vegetables and coffee — around Liquica. "But I have the support of everyone around here. I could get 1000, 2000 people together if I wanted," he boasts.

Asked again why a retired soldier such as himself had accepted a recall to active duty, he tenses up, then laughs when Liandro Lobato answers: "To get weapons. Yes, to get weapons," Conceicao says. "And because I knew there were other groups who

had weapons. "They were already in the game." Conceicao says he had no details of other armed hit squads, adding: "As far as I know, I was the last to be brought in."

But there are several inconsistencies in his account of events. What also remains unexplained in the episode is Conceicao's presence at Gusmao's home for several hours three weeks ago. It was on a Saturday when, according to Gusmao aide Agio Pereira, local citizens had unexpectedly telephoned to say they wanted to hand in some police rifles "to show their support for the President".

Conceicao was at that point still making his claims about the hit-squad assignment, demanding that he be allowed to surrender his rifles as "evidence" directly to Gusmao, and requesting armed protection because he feared being targeted by other hit-squad leaders.

However, drinking small cups of rich dark coffee on the President's neat front lawn, and joking with the former guerilla commander about developments in East Timor, Conceicao didn't look anything like a man in fear for his life.

Along with his former ally, Rogerio Lobato, Alkatiri now faces the prospect of court action over his alleged involvement in arming civilian gangs, although he strongly denies the claims.

He maintains he was the victim of a coup but has failed to produce any evidence to back his claim. Certainly, Gusmao and Ramos Horta were able to tweak events to their advantage after the arrival of Australian brigadier Mick Slater's peacekeepers.

By then Alkatiri had been terminally damaged. His decision to not appear on several promised TV interviews on ABC allowed Ramos Horta to monopolise the Australian media, helping to strengthen his leadership credentials. The Australian army's top commander in Dili rejects any charges of favouritism vis-a-vis Timorese politicians, despite claims by one commentator who queried the decision by Australian troops to provide rebel leader Alfredo Reinado with a bodyguard instead of arresting him. A Special Air Service bodyguard had been provided to Alkatiri

long before similar protection was offered to Reinado.

Army spokesman James Baker says the protection “cut both ways”. It allowed the Australian Defence Force to ensure both men stayed neutral.

So, what other factors contributed to Alkatiri’s demise? It is tempting to believe he and his factional allies in Fretilin were eyeing a pot of black gold, a steadily accruing \$600 million account in New York, as a handy petro-dollar war chest that would help them fight the May national elections.

His four years at the helm were characterised by an increasingly autocratic trend, according to critics, who say they faced muzzling by defamation laws that breached constitutional guarantees of free speech.

Alkatiri provided patronage for close family and party business interests, especially those of his brother Bader, who was given a monopoly weapons contract last year, sidestepping any parliamentary consent. Another brother, Ahmed, prospered from lucrative government construction contracts along with close political ally Oscar Lima.

Ordinary East Timorese, most of whom live in total poverty, were all too aware of the issue and so was the World Bank. “Alkatiri had some competence as an administrator and was a successful negotiator, but he wasn’t a popular politician,” says a senior Western diplomat in Dili, who asked not to be named. “He didn’t talk to people. He was certainly aloof.”

Perhaps one of the most compelling, yet least acknowledged, examples of how much his own support had eroded within Fretilin came during a challenge to his leadership last May. Disagreeing with what she believed was an undemocratic ballot, Ana Pessoa — a deputy prime minister and staunch Alkatiri loyalist for five years — abstained from voting. Despite his claims of outside interference, it was a sign Alkatiri was losing support from his greatest power base.

Ramos Horta has vowed a new era of peace and stability. That promise is likely to be sorely tested in the months ahead. Hundreds of stolen and

looted weapons from the police paramilitary units remain unaccounted for, including large stocks of ammunition.

Slater says the population in Dili is still very nervous and Opposition foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd says it is too soon to be talking of pulling out the troops. The real losers are the more than 150,000 people displaced by the recent violence, living in squalid, temporary reception camps. Aid agencies are warning they should not become permanent fixtures.

"There are no longer any good guys," says one senior Dili-based UN official. "You used to be able to paint the pro-independence side as angels and the pro-Jakarta militia as evil. They've all got dirt on their hands after this."

Doubts linger on Horta's ability

Interpress News Service - July 14, 2006

Kalinga Seneviratne, Sydney — East Timor's new Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta has been warmly welcomed by Australia's foreign minister Alexander Downer as a leader who could help solve the country's political crisis. But analysts in the region doubt if Horta can deliver the goods, where his own country is concerned.

A major reason for this lingering doubt is the belief that Australia may have played a role in the downfall of the former prime minister Mari Alkatiri, who was pressured to resign, late last month, after the Australian media claimed that he has been secretly arming the militia to eliminate his opponents.

Horta, who is known to be a close ally of Australia, was thrust into the prime minister's role even though he is not even a member of Alkatiri's Fretilin Party, which holds 55 of the 88 seats in parliament, with opposition benches divided among 12 smaller parties.

Horta, speaking on ABC Radio, after his installation on Monday, said his government's

immediate role was to consolidate security in the country and indicated that Australian forces currently in the capital Dili will remain until the end of the year.

More than 2,200 foreign troops, mainly from Australia, were sent to Dili to restore law and order after rioting broke out in the capital between rival military factions leaving 21 people dead.

Horta wants a foreign troop presence in the country for a while. He said that with the agreement of the United Nations Security Council, at the end of the year, the remaining Australian forces would come under the UN umbrella as a peacekeeping force, "but, preferably for us, retaining Australian command leadership".

However, one of his two deputy prime ministers, Estanislau da Silva, Fretilin member of parliament and a close ally of Alkatiri predicted that there is a tough road ahead for the new leadership. When pressed by ABC radio for a statement of support for the new prime minister, he responded saying: "I don't support any person."

Alkatiri, said da Silva, did not resign. "His dismissal took place in very special circumstances, so the wounds, all the problems have not been healed properly".

Human rights activist Francisco da Silva Gari speaking with IPS from Dili said that Ramos Horta's appointment may help to restore order in the short term, but, he will have huge challenges in the long term.

He said there is a perception that Alkatiri's dismissal was engineered by Canberra because "he was tough in negotiations with Australia on the oil and gas deals, (because) he was trying to defend the rights of Timorese (for their natural resources)".

Without naming names, he said that some political leaders have used the so-called conflict between people from the east and west to serve their own political goals and "received support from a foreign country that has interest in Timor oil". Gari argued that during Indonesian occupation "we did not distinguish our people from east and west,

we were together for the struggle for independence".

Damian Grenfell, a researcher at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology who focuses on security issues in East Timor, agrees that there is no history of an east-west conflict. "Rather this is a conflict between access to state resources and political control, that has seen parts of the community mobilised on an east-west basis" he told IPS in an interview., "This is a potential cause for future instability".

He argues that while there will be no tears in Canberra over Alkatiri's departure, "the risks for Australia of triggering such a crisis are huge, and include creating the space for a new leadership within Timor Leste (as East Timor is known in Portuguese), that would be far more antithetical to Australian national interests".

But, the head of the Department of International Relations at the University of Indonesia, Haryadi Wiryawan, sees it differently. He was quoted in the Jakarta Post recently as saying that "Alkatiri's socialist outlook is seen as not in line with what they (Australia) want East Timor to be", and his closeness to China did not please Canberra either.

Just before the crisis erupted in Dili, Alkatiri's government had awarded a major oil exploration contract to Petro China and was also reported to be close to signing an agreement with Beijing to build a petroleum refinery in Dili which would have undermined Australia's plans to build one in the northern Australian city of Darwin to process oil and gas resources from the disputed Timor Gap — which has an estimated 30 billion US dollars worth of resources.

"There is no doubt that the Australian government has never liked Alkatiri and spreads unfavourable information about him, attributing him with being responsible for imposing Portuguese and accusing him of being a Marxist," Australian academic Helen Hill, author of 'Stirring of Nationalism in East Timor', told IPS.

Hill argued that the Australian media is probably even worse, and they have played a role in Alkatiri's downfall by accusing him of being born

in Yemen, not being Timorese, not speaking the Tetum language, of wanting to install a 'one-party' system and of nepotism and corruption.

"They fail to realise that Alkatiri's great achievement of getting a much better deal for the Greater Sunrise Unitisation Agreement and setting up the Petroleum Fund, is widely praised as is his bringing in of Cuban doctors to work in the rural areas and his policy of saving Timor-Leste from international debt," Hill noted. "He is, unfortunately, one of the few ministers who can get Timorese to focus on economic issues and push the country towards the (UN prescribed) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). If he is not re-appointed as a minister it will be very difficult for Timor-Leste to get back on this path".

How the UN failed Timor Leste

ChannelNews Asia - July 14, 2006

Marianne Kearney, Dili — Mr Joao Cancio Freitas might be the director of Dili's Institute of Technology, but like almost three quarters of this city's population, he has spent weeks living in one of the dozen refugee camps dotted around Timor Leste's capital.

He and his family, along with 7,000 other refugees, have been sleeping in a hot car park opposite the inappropriately-named United Nations (UN) compound or Obrigada Barracks — "obrigada" in the local tetum language means "thank you very much".

But these days not too many Timorese are singing the UN's praises. It is thanks to the UN and international donors that Timor Leste has verged on collapse, say Mr Freitas and other observers. After all, they say, the world body and donors hastily assembled a skeleton of a government, failed to properly train the security forces, and barely made a dent in the country's crushing poverty.

During the 1999 independence vote, 1,500 people were killed and 70 per cent of infrastructure was

destroyed. For the next three years, the UN effectively built the nation from scratch. "The things that deserve credit are the UN humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. But governance was the biggest problem," said Mr Freitas.

One of the major failures was the police force. Its recent, spectacular collapse — police traded fire with the military or abandoned their posts - was in part due to inadequate training. The police, many of whom had poor training under Indonesian rule, were trained by police personnel from many countries with conflicting methods of policing.

"The UN brought in people from 112 countries, ranging from the best to the worst. Many didn't have any experience. The worst part was they came for six months and then left," said Mr Freitas.

The UN denies the charges, saying it expects its police trainers to "conduct training in accordance with international human rights standards", said the UN's Dili spokesperson, Ms Donna Cusumano.

Sacked interior minister Rogerio Lobato, who served five years in jail in Angola for diamond smuggling, and ex-premier Mari Alkatiri are also to blame, said Mr Freitas. Together, they turned the police force into a rival for the military, with more arms and the creation of rapid-reaction, special forces.

"They (the UN) should have said, you've got a crook as your interior minister. But the people that had a political mandate to criticise the government didn't do it," said one observer, who has been in Timor since 1999.

Other analysts point to the UN's failure to adequately prepare the Timorese to run their own nation, with too much aid money funding expensive expatriate salaries. "The UN only teaches how to build institutions but doesn't care how they function," said Mr Marcelino Magno from the Timor Institute for Development Studies.

He accused the UN of hiring Timorese as "translators, drivers and cleaners" rather than employing the dozens of qualified locals for more senior positions. When the UN ran Timor Leste, "internationals occupied key positions and were

only slowly replaced by Timorese, often with little skills transfer or training", the World Bank said in a recent report.

Since 1999, international donors have given more than US\$2 billion (\$3.16 billion) to Timor Leste. But little of that money went towards developing local agricultural and fisheries industries to reduce poverty, said economist Joao Saldinha of the Timor Institute for Development Studies.

At least 30 per cent of that aid was spent on foreigners' salaries and consultants' fees, Mr Saldinha added. "Normally in post-conflict societies, aid starts to trickle in slowly and then gradually increases," he said. "But in Timor it boomed really quickly, creating an artificial boom economy. I argued against this."

Five years later, with 40 per cent of the population living in poverty, there is little evidence of this boom. Most young men sell oranges, or phone cards and cigarettes.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a speech last month admitted that the UN had perhaps rushed the job in Timor Leste. "We have learned — at a painful price for Timor Leste — that the building of institutions on the basis of... democracy and the rule of law is not a simple process that can be completed within a few short years," Mr Annan said.

Horta a good choice but challenges lie ahead: analysts

Agence France Presse - July 9, 2006

Dili — East Timor's new prime minister Jose Ramos-Horta is the candidate best placed to unify the traumatised nation but the Nobel laureate could still face opposition and challenges lie ahead, analysts warned.

President Xanana Gusmao announced on Saturday that Ramos-Horta, 56, would lead the half-island nation until elections in early 2007, ending weeks of political paralysis.

The post became vacant when Mari Alkatiri stepped down on June 26, as pressure intensified on him to wear the blame for violence between rampaging rival security force factions that left at least 21 people dead in May.

The bloody unrest forced 150,000 people from their homes, the vast majority of whom remain in refugee camps, unsure of their safety despite the presence of more than 2,200 Australian-led foreign peacekeepers.

Ramos-Horta, who tirelessly campaigned for East Timor's independence from Indonesia on the international stage and won a Nobel peace prize for his fight, had been widely tipped as a likely choice by Alkatiri's ruling Fretilin party.

Although he is a political independent and not a party member, he helped found the decades-old party.

Australian analyst Damien Kingsbury, from Deakin University, said Ramos-Horta's diplomatic skills would help bring calm to Asia's poorest nation.

"It's a very sensible decision. He is well-respected, well-liked and he is capable, and that alone would seem to make him a very good choice," he told AFP, adding that Ramos-Horta would also be able to maintain East Timor's international profile.

"He has good international links and in terms of maintaining... cordial relations with key countries such as Portugal, Japan and Australia, he will be good," Kingsbury said.

The analyst said he did not expect a backlash from Fretilin, which nominated him along with several of its senior ministers for the post, because the party probably realised it needed to choose him if it wanted to stay popular.

"Fretilin, I think, was feeling a bit shell-shocked and if it didn't come up with Horta as a possibility, then it would have been negligent."

Ramos-Horta's strong relationship with Gusmao — who did not get on well with Alkatiri — "will mean greater coherence and cooperation" between the presidency and cabinet than under the former

premier's rule, he added.

Joao Mariana Saldinha, a commentator from the Timor Institute of Development Studies, warned that Ramos-Horta still faces some opposition and will have a tough few months ahead.

He noted that Major Augusto "Tara" Araujo, a rebel soldier who has reportedly said he does not trust Ramos-Horta, was planning to organise protests in the capital next week, according to the daily Suara Timor Loro-sae. "Demonstrations are coming back next week. Let's see what he does in the first place" about these, Saldinha said.

He also noted that Ramos-Horta would need to focus on pressing security issues — with refugees still stuck in camps — as well as high unemployment and preparing for elections. "Whether he can deliver will depend on who will be in charge of the key ministries of economy, infrastructure and agriculture," he said.

A member of Fretilin's reformist wing, Aderito de Jesus Soares, said Ramos-Horta would need to work quickly to unite different groups.

"It really depends on how he brings different groups including the (Catholic) church to the table," he said, noting that some Alkatiri critics, saw Ramos-Horta as working too closely with the former premier's supporters. "Let's see whether he can convince opposition as well as Fretilin," he said.

Ramos-Horta needs to work successfully with Alkatiri's allies in Fretilin — who form the dominant faction — in order to have an effective parliament and pass electoral amendments ahead of the polls, Soares told AFP. The appointment of Estanislau da Silva, an Alkatiri loyalist, as a deputy prime minister was a good compromise, he said.

Ramos-Horta, da Silva, and second deputy prime minister Rui Araujo, another Fretilin minister, are expected to meet before or on Monday and a new government is to then be sworn in. Ramos-Horta is not expected to make a statement until Monday, his spokesman said Saturday.

Unanswered questions in power plays

Sydney Morning Herald - July 10, 2006

Damien Kingsbury — The appointment of Jose Ramos Horta as East Timor's interim prime minister is a move towards installing a unifying figure for a small nation that, for a moment, appeared to be in danger of fragmenting. A fragmented nation, in this case, would have meant a failed state.

East Timor became a nation in response to a common Indonesian enemy. But like most other post-colonial states, it has had to construct a national identity that no longer relies on uniting against an oppressor, but uniting towards common goals.

Ramos Horta has the capacity to appeal across East Timor's political divide, and what was becoming a geographic divide. In particular, he will be able to support members of the ruling Fretilin party opposed to the leadership style of the former prime minister, Mari Alkatiri.

Alkatiri is claiming parliamentary immunity from a charge of arming a hit squad, although this claim does not appear to be constitutionally supportable.

As well as appealing to Fretilin's so-called "reformation group" and across party lines, Ramos Horta will bring the government closer to the highly popular president, Xanana Gusmao. Gusmao and Ramos Horta have a strong personal and political bond, and while the presidency remains largely ceremonial Gusmao has huge legitimacy among ordinary East Timorese. Ramos Horta, too, is widely popular, and the alliance of these two will strengthen and stabilise East Timor's political environment.

Apart from the building trust and unity, Ramos Horta's first task will be to restore East Timor's security forces. The police will be retrained and probably restructured with international assistance.

The future of the army, however, is in some doubt. Since its inception in 2002, East Timor's Defence Force has lacked purpose and been prone to political intrigues. It is too small for meaningful defence but still drains 8 per cent of East Timor's small budget.

A retrained police could assume outstanding defence roles, such as sea boundary protection, as they already have border protection duties. However the military, still linked to the old resistance movement, the military is persuasive politically, and may survive.

As prime minister, Ramos Horta is not likely to alter Fretilin's fiscally conservative policies. East Timor has so far operated with a balanced or surplus budget and without international loans, committing receipts from oil and gas revenue to a long-term fund and moving into modest economic growth.

Rather than Alkatiri's highly centralised control of government spending, it will probably be more devolved to the districts, adding small stimulus to local economies.

Beyond that, Ramos Horta will continue to push for a petrochemical processing plant for East Timor, as well as extending the leasing of oil and gas fields. Other policies, such as food self-sufficiency, will likely continue untouched.

If there is a problem with Ramos-Horta's appointment, it is that there are some in Fretilin who remain unhappy with his role in Alkatiri's downfall. There is also the issue of the head of government not belonging to the majority party, which will affect Fretilin as it approaches next year's elections.

Fretilin would no doubt prefer to enter elections under the leadership of one of its own members. To that end, Ramos Horta will have to clarify his own political ambitions.

Ramos Horta will be weighing up three options. The first is to try to stay on as prime minister, the second to become president, and the third option is to bid to become secretary-general of the United Nations.

To stay on as prime minister, Ramos Horta will have to rejoin Fretilin, the party he left a decade and a half ago, and will require renegotiating his relationship with some party members. Fretilin is still likely to draw a strong, probably majority, vote next year, given its institutional strength and depth of support, especially outside Dili.

Ramos Horta would probably like to become president, but would not bid for that position unless his close political friend Gusmao fulfilled his long-standing wish to retire from public life.

There had also been speculation that Ramos Horta could replace Kofi Annan as head of the UN, although to be available for this he would be better positioned by resuming being foreign minister. That will in turn depend on whether Ramos Horta's prime ministership is indeed interim, or whether the logic of his appointment is seen as too strong to end.

[Associate Professor Damien Kingsbury is director of international and community development at Deakin University. He is, with Dr Michael Leach, editor of the forthcoming book East Timor: Beyond Independence (Monash Asia Institute).]

A prime minister deposed, but at great cost

Sydney Morning Herald - July 10, 2006

John Martinkus — Three weeks ago in East Timor I was given information from senior members of the East Timorese military that confirmed what the now deposed prime minister had been saying all along. There had been three attempts since April last year to get senior command figures in the East Timorese army to carry out a coup against the Government of the former prime minister, Mari Alkatiri.

In light of what has happened since it seems obvious a very well orchestrated campaign has been carried out to bring the Government down. And it has worked. For reasons best known to themselves the opposition to Alkatiri enlisted the support of

a group of junior officers in the East Timorese defence forces, the F-FDTL, who broke with the army command and took their weapons with them. They attacked the F-FDTL on May 23 and 24 and precipitated the widespread unrest in Dili that led to the international forces being called in. Then came the destruction of property by the gangs from the west, mainly aimed at those from the east who are perceived as supporting the Fretilin Government, then the string of allegations presented to the foreign press, that finally led to Alkatiri's resignation.

There is no doubt that whoever has been behind this campaign has covered their tracks and it will be difficult to link the interests involved to the destruction that has led to 150,000 East Timorese now living in refugee camps around the capital, too afraid to go home.

But it was the plight of these people that was used as an instrument by the opposition groups to call for Alkatiri's removal even though the same groups had initiated the violence in the first place. It was a very callous and cynical political manoeuvre to say the least, especially considering these people are now facing chronic food shortages.

But some obvious questions have not been answered by the Australian press who have been almost unanimous in condemning the ruling Fretilin party that, like it or not, did have an overwhelming mandate to govern until mid next year that had been granted in elections supervised by the UN and declared free and fair — with much fanfare, I remember, as I covered them.

First, who started the violence? Surely in any other country if a group of disaffected soldiers takes off with weapons and then launches two very open assaults on the army, as Alfredo Reinado's men did on May 23 and 24, then shouldn't they be arrested? Yet they were given Australian SAS bodyguards and remain free after handing back only a fraction of the weapons they took with them.

Second, who were these gangs that overwhelmingly targeted the homes of those from the east who were perceived as supporting the Fretilin Government? Brigadier Mick Slater, the commander of the Australian forces in East Timor, whose men had to

deal with these groups, said: "There were definitely groups, let's call them gangs, that were definitely being manipulated and co-ordinated by other people from outside that gang environment."

Even after the resignation of Alkatiri, houses of Fretilin members and those from the east were still being targeted and refugees threatened. It revealed a lot about who had been behind the violence.

Third, who was making the allegations against Alkatiri and did they stand up? After the violence subsided, the opposition to Alkatiri seemed to take a different tack. There were the allegations and rumours of a mass grave with 60, 70, 80, or as many as 500 victims of an Alkatiri-ordered massacre — depending how far down the rumour chain you heard the story. There was supposed to be a list of dead held by a priest. Then there wasn't, and the story fell by the wayside. Next were the allegations by the so-called Alkatiri death squad. Other reporters had been to see this group and some had chosen not to report on it. They were located in the house of the Carrascalao family and their story didn't seem to be true. The Carrascalao family are an established family in East Timor were instrumental in the UDT party that fought a brief civil war with Fretilin in 1975 — people with axes to grind.

There were other things about the death squad allegations that didn't make sense. When the F-FDTL base was attacked on May 24, men from that same group participated in the attack alongside men from Reinado's group. It was an inconsistency picked up by Alkatiri himself, who told me in Dili: "What kind of secret Fretilin group is this that they are also fighting against the FDTL? This is contradictory."

In short those who had been trying to find East Timorese officers to act against the Government look like they have succeeded but at the cost of the dislocation of 150,000 Timorese. Surely it would have simply been easier to wait for next year's elections.

[Journalist John Martinkus is the author of several books, including *A Dirty Little War: An Eyewitness Account of East Timor's Descent into*

East Timor: Deepening of elite crisis

Green Left Weekly - July 5, 2006

Jon Lamb — The political crisis in East Timor has deepened following the resignation of East Timorese Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri on June 26. As pro and anti-government protests and gang violence continue, a resolution of the present crisis has been hamstrung by the internal political manoeuvres of the political elite.

The sustained pressure for Alkatiri to resign — intensified by the allegations aired on the June 19 ABC TV Four Corners program that he ordered the creation of a secret gang to eliminate and intimidate political opponents — came to a head with the threat made by President Xanana Gusmao on June 21 that he would resign if Alkatiri did not step down as prime minister.

Gusmao's announcement precipitated further pressure upon Alkatiri and the Fretilin-led government, providing additional motivation to the anti-Alkatiri political opponents and critics. However, it also threatened to inflame an already volatile situation, a fact that Gusmao must have been fully aware of. Following Gusmao's announcement there was an almost constant series of protests ranging in size from a few hundred to 1000-2000 outside the national parliament.

The first response of Alkatiri and Fretilin was to see out Gusmao's bluff. The Fretilin central committee meeting held on the weekend of June 24-25 reaffirmed its support for Alkatiri as leader of the party and prime minister. Adding to the tense situation, foreign minister and acting minister for defence Jose Ramos Horta announced his resignation from these posts late on June 25. In an unanticipated move, Alkatiri announced at a press conference at his residence on June 26 that he was stepping down as prime minister.

Alkatiri told reporters: "I am ready to resign from my position of prime minister of the

government of RDTL [East Timor] so as to avoid the resignation of his excellency the president of the republic", adding that: "having deeply reflected on the present situation prevailing in the country... assuming my own share of responsibility for the crisis affecting our country".

In an interview on the ABC's 7.30 Report on June 27, Horta stated that "in the next two or three days, we should be able to reach a political resolution in terms of a transition government that will continue the work of the previous government until elections next year".

Horta claimed that the election of Alkatiri as secretary-general of Fretilin at the party's congress in May was seen as illegitimate, as it "violated the principle of secret ballot that is enshrined by law" and that the broader Fretilin leadership was also illegitimate. However, "we have to balance that against the reality that the largest party in this country is Fretilin. So, the president is trying to navigate through this political complexity and find consensus to form a government in the next few days."

After an all day session of the Council of State, Gusmao announced in a communique late on June 27 that early elections might be called. "If, despite everything, a new government is not possible, the President of the Republic will consider the possibility of dissolving parliament and anticipating general elections", he stated. General elections were originally set to take place in May 2007. Gusmao also confirmed that he was extending for 30 days emergency measures declared on May 30.

The resignation of Alkatiri, while welcomed by opponents and opposition figures, did not reduce the political tension or gang violence. By the afternoon of June 27, a large gathering of Fretilin members and sympathisers had gathered near the town of Hera, around 16 kilometres to the east of Dili, preparing to enter Dili and rally in support of Alkatiri.

Alkatiri and other key Fretilin leaders and members of parliament addressed the crowd. In a speech televised by the national broadcaster, Alaktiri told the gathering that: "Some elements tried to bring down the government through

burnings and destruction, but that's not the right way. They did these things so the people would no longer believe in a constitutional government."

Alkatiri's address to the rally of Fretilin supporters resulted in a dramatic increase in Dili on the evening of June 27 with house burnings and attacks upon known Fretilin or Alkatiri sympathisers. There were also reports of some refugee camps being intimidated by gangs and threats to workers at the national television station RTTL.

Anti-government protests and related gang violence continued the following day and threatened to deteriorate further. Gusmao made an impassioned plea again for the protestors to return home. According to a news report on June 28 by the Portuguese Lusa news service: "A protest leader, dissident army Maj. Alves Tara, however, said his anti-fretilin demonstrators would come back in 30 days if the fretilin-dominated parliament was not dissolved and early elections called."

The Suara Timor Lorasae reported on June 28 that six opposition parties in parliament expressed no confidence in Fretilin leader and president of the parliament Francisco (Lu'olo) Guterres, stating that he was incapable of tabling discussion on the current crisis. Joao Carrascalao, president of the still partially influential Timorese Democratic Union, has called for Gusmao to institute a "State of Crisis" and the dissolution of parliament.

On June 29, the first contingents of Fretilin buses and trucks carrying thousands of Fretilin supporters entered Dili throughout the day in preparation for Alkatiri's court appearance on June 30. A Fretilin press release estimated the crowd at 6000, "twice the size of anything seen on the streets of Dili in the last few weeks".

A letter delivered to Gusmao from the Militants and Supporters of Fretilin called for an end to the violence and recriminations and asserted that: "We as militants and supporters of Fretilin state that Fretilin should nominate the Prime Minister in the interim government, in accordance with our Constitution, the highest law of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste."

Prominent opposition leader Francisco de Araujo,

who heads the Democratic Party (PD), was reported in the June 28 Australian as stating that there should be a broader investigation of government ministers and the events of April and May. "I think all the people close to Alkatiri and Lobato [indicted former interior minister] should be investigated... Jose Teixeira [investment minister] and Ramos Horta, they are part of the cabinet. In particular, Horta tried to hide the number of victims. They should be investigated", de Araujo said. Araujo, a former student and clandestine activist in the independence struggle, fled to the hills during the height of the crisis in May because of claims of threats to his life. The PD is viewed as having strong links with Gusmao.

The events of recent weeks confirm that Fretilin is still capable of mobilising a significant support base, which also indicates that it would in all likelihood win a majority if an early election is called. What remains unclear at this stage is the extent of the support base for the opposition parties and how well organised the supporters of these parties are. Another unknown is what course and impact the factional differences within Fretilin may take. These factors will influence and test any new transitional government or government of "national unity" that may be formed prior to the elections.

East Timor after Alkatiri: nation or protectorate?

Green Left Weekly - July 5, 2006

Tim Anderson — "We did not expect that the elected leader of a party with an overwhelming mandate could be forced to stand down in this way in a democracy." — Fretilin press release, June 26, 2006.

Backed by a foreign army, and with his country's own army confined to its barracks, the great resistance leader Xanana Gusmao finally led the charge to topple the leadership of Timor Leste's first post-independence government. But the backing of Australia was critical.

If this appears puzzling, we must understand that whatever the configuration of East Timor's new government, there will be lasting bitterness among the major players over the handling of the recent crisis and intervention, and conflict over how to manage the new relationship with Australia. June's palace coup has implications not just for the personalities involved, but also for the country's development strategy. Any new government in East Timor needs to be understood alongside the country's relationship with Australia and with the World Bank.

The current talk of a "more inclusive" or a "national unity" government misses the point that all recent political leadership in East Timor has been by coalition. The broadest of these, the CNRT (National Council for Timorese Resistance, formed in 1998), was disbanded after the UN insisted on multi-party elections. The Fretilin-led government, elected in 2001, included high profile ex-Fretilin members Jose Ramos Horta and the separately elected president, Gusmao. After the coming elections the composition of the government may not be much different.

The immediate difference is the sidelining of Mari Alkatiri, Fretilin's chief strategist, following his forced resignation as prime minister. Suggested charges against Alkatiri (for arming paramilitaries during the coup attempt) will go nowhere; and the "hit squad" accusations, broadcast by Australia's ABC TV, have no credibility. But the toppling of the leadership of an elected government, supported by both the Australian media and the Australian military intervention, flags a new political reality for East Timorese citizens.

The Australian newspaper, leader of the anti-Alkatiri charge, says his removal will be "good news for Australian companies wanting to do business in Dili". But Fretilin remains (by a long way) the major party in parliament. Rupert Murdoch's flagship insists the "continuing crisis" requires a semi-permanent Australian troop presence to block what the paper calls a "Marxist revolutionary" government, and because "there is no other way to keep the country from sliding back into chaos".

Yet the "chaos" was in large part fostered by

Australian passive support for the rebels and hostility to the government; while the "Marxist revolution" was a rather modest economic nationalism, led by Alkatiri. The areas of tension with Australia arising from independent policy in East Timor included the refusal of World Bank loans, differences over agricultural policy, and the acceptance of Cuban health assistance. Gusmao has not expressed a distinct vision for development, remaining concerned with reconciliation. Ramos Horta has expressed a wish for closer relations with the US and Australia, and a greater privileging of foreign investment. But there is no sign yet that Fretilin will abandon the more independent course set by Alkatiri.

Herein lies the problem. An oligarchy of Australian business leaders, who consistently opposed East Timorese independence pre-1999, have openly declared themselves hostile to the Fretilin-led project. The Howard regime gives lip service to East Timorese autonomy, but shares the hostility. This is a strategic hostility as much as opposition to any particular policy. But the "protectorate" mind-set certainly wants easier access to East Timorese resources, greater privileging of foreign investment, abolition of East Timor's army and a shift in national language policy from Portuguese-Tetum to English-Tetum.

It seems likely that, even with Alkatiri sidelined, a Fretilin-led government will maintain the strategy spelt out in East Timor's National Development Plan and sectoral policies, and backed by the constitution. Alternatively (and if Murdoch's scribblers have their way), a more "Australian friendly" government might be persuaded to abandon its economic nationalist past, and accept protectorate status.

World Bank 'partnerships'

So what is the problem with a small country taking loans from the World Bank and becoming more "Western friendly"?

The process begins with loans for essential infrastructure, usually power and roads; and in East Timor everyone has been complaining about power and roads. The World Bank would loan money to the government at low commercial interest or

(in view of East Timor's low GDP per capita) a very low International Development Association loan at only 0.7% interest over 35 years. This, at first glance, seems generous. But strict conditions would be attached, in the form of a "good governance" contract.

An important section of the "good governance" conditions would stipulate that, while the loan is public, the construction and service delivery would be private — a "development partnership". This means that large foreign companies would be contracted to construct the power grid and roads, while others would meter and enforce a user-pays power supply regime. As the "good governance" agreement would also stipulate no price subsidies, the only way poor families could access power would be by direct fiscal subsidy. But the government has no spare cash, which is why it would have borrowed in the first place.

Such "partnership" schemes have made even water supplies unaffordable in major cities, from the Philippines to Bolivia. The small middle classes who can afford the fees might get a better service, but the government will still have to intervene to ensure quality and contain the corruption that privatisations generate. Poor families' access to water or power would depend on their capacity to pay.

User-pays regimes, urged by the World Bank across all services, damage access to education and health services. The evidence on this is conclusive. Neoliberalism in the 1980s redefined the global consensus on the right to education, so that only primary education is regarded as a full right and is therefore subsidised in poor countries. Secondary education, essential for social mobility but subject to user-pays principles, became unaffordable for the children of most poor families. In oil rich but neoliberal Venezuela in the late 1990s, only 20% of children reached senior high school. More than half the children in today's Bali, flush with tourist dollars, do not reach senior high school. Neoliberal regimes have denied a whole generation of poor children their future. With World Bank "good governance", secondary school enrolments in East Timor would go backwards.

Health services are linked to education. With no

mass training of health workers, services are scarce and expensive. Despite three decades of Australian aid and World Bank programs, Papua New Guinea has shocking infant and maternal mortality figures. There are simply no doctors outside the provincial capitals. PNG has outstanding export performance in oil, gas, gold, copper, and logs. Exports have made up over 40% of PNG's GDP for two decades. But there has been no "trickle down" in health benefits. If Australia and the World Bank displace the 100 Cuban doctors in East Timor, and send off that nasty "communist" system that has offered 600 free medical scholarships to young East Timorese, the country's health standards would match that of PNG.

Cash crops

Then there is agriculture and land, still at the core of livelihoods for most poor people. The neoliberal preference here is clear: export-oriented cash crops and individual, saleable land title. This is why the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), after the Asian economic crisis and under their "structural adjustment" programs, backed clear-fell logging and oil palm development over more than 2 million hectares in Indonesia; an environmental catastrophe which has trampled on the land rights and livelihoods of forest peoples. Abolition of rice and kerosene subsidies led to food riots in Jakarta.

In Morocco, where land was rationalised for export crops, people were driven off the land, and the subsistence sector was damaged. In Peru under Fujimori in the 1990s, land holdings under ten hectares were banned as agriculture was rationalised. Thousands of small farmers were pushed off the land. In Lima, removal of fuel subsidies led to a cholera outbreak, causing 2000 deaths in six months when poor people could no longer afford to boil water.

Public institutions, so important in defining the identity of a new nation, are repeatedly blocked by neoliberal forces. Food security was of deep concern to the East Timorese when they went to the World Bank in 2000, asking for help to rehabilitate their rice fields, to strengthen their subsistence sector and to establish public grain silos. The World Bank and Australia said "No". Agricultural aid was only available for

export crops. East Timor was advised to import rice. Despite this, the government proceeded to develop its rice industry, without World Bank help.

This ideological commitment to export cash crops explains sustained World Bank, ADB and Australian subsidies to the oil palm industry in Papua New Guinea, even though this industry is dominated by large foreign companies. Small farmers get few benefits from this industry, but suffer substantial environmental costs. Infrastructure development is also focused on monoculture cash crops.

Often the “transition” to a Western-friendly regime is accompanied by promises of aid and foreign investment, which can bring wider benefits. But here many poor countries face the “Nicaraguan dilemma”. After getting rid of the left-wing Sandinista government in 1990 (through guerrilla war and an economic blockade), the US reneged on its aid promises and foreign investment failed to materialise.

So why do the leaders of developing countries participate in neoliberal programs, when they are so damaging for ordinary poor people? Sometimes they have been obliged to cut political deals, for independence. Sometimes it is due to policy weakness and a desire to accommodate the big powers — some elements of this are now visible in East Timor. But very often leaders (such as Indonesia’s former president Suharto) enter the business elite themselves, taking commissions, rents and other benefits from cashed-up aid and privatisation programs. Neoliberal “good governance” (previously called “structural adjustment”) has most often enhanced this corruption, rather than preventing it.

The Australian role in undermining East Timorese independence is difficult to see now, with a barrage of media influencing the desire to see ourselves as the little country’s “saviours”. The Australian government is nothing of the sort. Australian friends of East Timor should recognise the shocking prospects of neoliberal protectorate status, and maintain their support for an independent nation.

[Reprinted from <<http://www.newmatilda.com>> . Tim

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'Own goals' only in East Timor

Australian Financial Review - July 3, 2006

Whit Mason — In the past few weeks, two Australian dreams have come crashing to earth. First, there was chaos in East Timor and then the Socceroos' defeat by Italy. Notwithstanding some dubious officiating in the latter, both disappointments stemmed from much the same shortcoming.

As Guus Hiddink said after the Socceroos lost to Italy, dominating the game in midfield is all very well, but in itself it doesn't achieve the goal of the game; to win, eventually you have to put the ball in the net. Incremental successes, in other words, don't necessarily add up to ultimate victory.

In East Timor, successfully managing the nuts and bolts of constructing a tiny new state could not in itself achieve the goal of the intervention: to help midwife the birth of a new East Timorese society free of the violence, insecurity and indignities its people suffered under Indonesian rule.

The Australian-led peacekeeping force and the UN administration in East Timor earned their reputation for success by doing well the things that other missions have often also done well. We know how to address the material needs of displaced people. We know how to deploy security forces to keep a lid on some forms of violence, at least temporarily. We know how to organise elections. And we know how to draw up new political institutions that conform, on paper, to our notions about prosperous, democratic societies.

What today's nation-builders do much less effectively — if indeed they attempt it at all — is to heal the wounds or fill the gaps in a

society's political culture which either caused, or resulted from, their violent collapse.

Societies don't fall apart because they lack the manual skills to build simple shelters or even to describe idealised political institutions. They fall apart because their people, often aggravated by trauma, material privations or institutional shortcomings, lack the capacity to resolve their differences civilly. This lack, in turn, reflects the absence of a sense of belonging to a community that extends beyond the family or village, and the confidence that one's countrymen will operate according to an identity of interests and a set of shared mores.

While realising that even collapsed societies can have very good elements, nation-builders must recognise that their political cultures invariably require first intensive surgery and then lengthy rehabilitation.

Much of the failure to address the essence of the nation and state building challenge — in Kosovo and Afghanistan at least as much as in East Timor — can be traced to ignorance about the host society (and non-Western and traumatised societies in general), to ideologically imposed constraints (often reinforced by timidity and stinginess), and to self-defeating hastiness.

East Timor's recent crisis was sparked by frustrations among soldiers and police from its western provinces. Mike Smith, a retired Australian major-general who was deputy commander of the UN peacekeeping force in East Timor, said last week that the peacekeepers were never aware of any ethnic or regional divisions within the army.

In a fractured society, nation-builders must assume that people's loyalties are primarily local. They should also assume that being victimised has not generally ennobled people but made them anxious and mistrustful.

Most of those involved in the East Timor intervention were laudably loath to act like neo-imperialists. But such unobtrusiveness can be self-defeating. The Falantil freedom fighters, for example, were allowed to create an army — without mechanisms to prevent its domination by a regional

power base.

East Timor is the poorest nation in Asia and has one of its highest birth rates. Yet foreign nation-builders deferred to the Catholic church's view of family planning, even while struggling to build an economy to provide for the exploding population.

Nation-building is a long process — much longer than the political and budgetary cycles that drive the politicians and bureaucrats who decide when interventions begin and end. Officials on the ground in East Timor pleaded with the UN Security Council to maintain a robust presence well after the country's independence in 2002 to no avail. Alas, time was up before the goal was found.

[Whit Mason is the co-author of *Peace at Any Price: How the World Failed Kosovo*, Hurst, London, published last week. He is a former UN official and NGO director in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and East Asia.]

Coffee shop politics of little help to Timor crisis

Australian Associated Press - July 2, 2006

Jill Jolliffe, Dili — A meeting of East Timor's parliament tomorrow will underline the surreal political world in which the troubled fledgling nation is now existing.

The country has no government, yet its 88 parliamentarians are being asked to approve its budget — after the fiscal year has ended — as well as electoral laws to eventually allow citizens to choose a new government.

President Xanana Gusmao has accepted prime minister Mari Alkatiri's resignation, but he has not passed the decree to formalise it, leading politician Mario Carrascalao observed, and six opposition parties have threatened to boycott parliament, but have now changed their minds.

It's as though the leaders are playing games with

the people, who are completely out of it. The president is ruling under emergency powers, but a week after Alkatiri quit over accusations he was responsible for the months of violence, Mr Gusmao has failed to name a caretaker prime minister.

Eight cabinet members preempted Alkatiri's decision to quit by hours, leaving only a shell of the former structure, drawn mainly from hard-line Fretilin ministers known as the Mozambique mafia, where they lived in exile during the resistance war against Indonesia.

With Timor lacking not only leaders, but also a police force, power now seems to pass through the Portuguese-run Hotel Timor's coffee shop — a spot continually haunted by politicians, a horde of journalists and assorted camp followers eavesdropping for the latest piece of political gossip.

Only the occasional rumble of Australian armoured personnel carriers is a reminder that the matters at stake are deadly serious. Beyond the coffee shop windows peacekeepers protect around 75,000 displaced victims of successive waves of violence.

The key debate revolve around the legality of Mr Alkatiri reoccupying the parliamentary seat which he obtained in 2001 elections but left to become prime minister.

He is facing questioning by chief prosecutor Longuinhos Monteiro over allegations that during the strife he armed a militia unit to attack his political opponents. He is suspected (but not indicted) of committing crimes carrying a penalty of 15 years.

He evaded a notification to appear on Friday on the grounds that his lawyers had not arrived from abroad.

The ex-prime minister also asserted in his letter to Monteiro that he enjoys immunity as a parliamentarian, although he still occupies a legal twilight zone between the two jobs. He is expected to turn up for his old job when the legislators meet.

Immunity can be lifted for any deputy charged with crimes carrying more than a two-year penalty, but

there is a catch-22: the president must ask the deputies to approve its lifting, and Mr Alkatiri's party has an overwhelming majority of 55 out of 88 seats.

In a national address Mr Gusmao specifically asked parliamentarians to return to work to pass the budget. Monarchist deputy and lawyer Manuel Tilman points out that the \$US315 million (\$A427.38 million) budget proposed for 2006-2007 cannot be approved legally, so the country will have to lurch on under monthly extensions of the 2005-2006 version, valued at \$US142 million (\$A192.66 million).

The overdue approval of an electoral draft bill was a different matter, he said, as the babble of the coffee lounge intriguers rises. "We can't approve a budget without a government," he observes solemnly, because it requires specific projects and expense details, but we can pass an electoral law without a government — that's not a problem."

The unusual suspect

Straits Times - July 2, 2006

John McBeth — A descendant of Islamic-proselytising Yemeni traders, educated in the then-Marxist-ruled states of Angola and Mozambique, the newly deposed prime minister of Timor Leste Mari Alkatiri is a complex and enigmatic figure who has easily worn the image of the villain in the months of unrest that has wracked Asia's newest country.

Labelled variously as corrupt, a control freak and even a communist, the slight 55-year-old technocrat is facing the same accusations now formally levelled against ex-interior minister and close ally Rogerio Lobato — that he distributed weapons to civilian militia, allegedly with the intention of liquidating his political opponents.

But if Lobato has implicated him in the purported conspiracy, many questions remain unanswered. "More evidence is needed to determine conclusively

that he was involved," says one Western diplomat in Dili. "The difference between arming civilians and actually hiring hit squads has been lost on most people."

Diplomats also question the capacity of the Timor Leste authorities to conduct a proper investigation, given the ethnic, political and historical factors that continue to divide the society. Chief among them, according to one analyst, is the struggle for the levers of power between those who fought for independence on the ground and those who worked in the political underground abroad.

Mr Alkatiri, who often comes across as cold and autocratic, is no match for President Xanana Gusmao in the popularity stakes. Although he and his Revolutionary Front of Independent Timor (Fretilin) may have outgunned the President in drafting the country's Constitution, the charismatic former guerilla fighter has demonstrated that he still commands moral authority when the chips are down.

Not everyone seeks to demonise Mr Alkatiri, a constitutional expert who appears to genuinely believe he is doing the best for his country.

"He's very capable and has an immense understanding of things Timorese," says one Western diplomat, who admits he is baffled by current events. "He's hugely astute, there wouldn't be a strategic thinker better than him. But he does have a penchant for going off the rails."

That showed in the inflammatory speech Mr Alkatiri delivered after he was forced to step down. It may also be shown in the current investigation into why as many as 4,000 automatic weapons were imported over the past four years and why the Lobato-controlled police force grew in the same timeframe from 1,800 to 3,000 men - more than twice that of the army, which is generally loyal to Mr Gusmao.

Mr Alkatiri was born in Dili in November 1949, one of 10 brothers and sisters. After completing primary and secondary school, he left in 1970 to pursue higher education in other sleepy Portuguese colonies, graduating as a chartered surveyor at

the Angolan School of Geography and then earning a law degree at Mozambique's Eduardo Mondlane University.

He was already active in the independence struggle, helping to establish the Movement for the Liberation of Timor Leste and then, in 1974, co-founding Fretilin and its armed wing, the National Liberation Armed Forces of Timor Leste.

Returning to Dili after the Portuguese abandoned the enclave in 1975, he became Minister for Political Affairs in the newly declared Democratic Republic of Timor Leste.

But it was all to be short-lived, with the impoverished island colony sliding into a bitter civil war between followers of the Marxist-orientated Fretilin and Indonesian-backed rightists. In December 1975, Mr Alkatiri left Dili as a member of a three-man delegation seeking to head off Jakarta's impending invasion. It was to be the last flight out.

Three days later, Indonesian troops poured across the border, leaving Mr Alkatiri to spend the next 24 years in Mozambique, working in the shadow of leading Timorese lobbyist Jose Ramos-Horta to rally international support for the resistance movement. He was not to return to the country until October 1999, six weeks after the country's bloody vote for independence from harsh Indonesian rule.

In September 2001, Mr Alkatiri was appointed Chief Minister of the United Nations-guided Second Transitional Government and Minister for Economy and Development. Six months later, on May 20, 2002, he became Prime Minister and Minister for Development and Environment of the fully independent Democratic Republic of Timor Leste.

In the four years since then, Mr Alkatiri has been unable to shake the suspicion with which he is viewed by a majority of Timorese — not least because he is a practising Muslim in a staunchly Catholic country. His plan last year to make religious education optional in schools only alienated him even further from influential church leaders.

Then there is the Marxist tag, which continues to

haunt him in an era when the Cold War template seems strangely out of place.

Australian-educated Resources Minister Jose Texeira, who worked closely with him in the testy negotiations with the Australian government over oil and gas rights in the Timor Sea, described that accusation in one recent interview as "very, very foul".

Certainly, Mr Alkatiri is not popular in Canberra. But he was not alone in taking a tough line. UN administrator Sergio de Mello, later killed in the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, brought former US diplomat Peter Galbraith on board in 2000, first as director of external affairs and then as minister of external affairs in the first transitional administration.

According to Mr Galbraith, Mr de Mello "smelt a rat" over Australia's rush to negotiate a new agreement to replace the controversial Timor Gap treaty it had signed with Indonesia in 1989 — seen as quasi-recognition of Jakarta's 1975 annexation of the territory. Mr Galbraith and Mr Alkatiri, both equally combative, proved to be an effective tag team.

Still, there is something familiar and old-fashioned about what Mr Alkatiri's government hoped to achieve, electing to force the Portuguese language on a population that overwhelmingly speaks Tetum and Indonesian. Dominated by other like-minded exiles from Mozambique, it has been edging towards the establishment of a one-party state with little adherence to the most basic of democratic principles.

The approach to free and fair elections has been one major cause for concern, given the fact that Timorese have yet to directly elect their representatives — something they perhaps should have done under initial UN tutelage. Although the first parliamentary elections are due next year, little effort has been made so far to introduce a new electoral law or form an independent commission to conduct the exercise.

Particularly worrying for critics is the way Mr Alkatiri retained his controlling position as secretary-general of Fretilin by replacing a secret ballot with a show of hands at last month's

party congress. Diplomatic sources say he had hired goons sitting next to each voting candidate to ensure they voted the right way.

Would-be challenger Jose Luis Guterres, the former ambassador to the UN and the US, dropped out of the running in disgust. As he put it: "They have chosen an electoral method that is typically Leninist and used by the leaders of communist countries to maintain their hold on power."

As the architect of the country's national development plan, Mr Alkatiri was popular with donors. But analysts say while the plan was fine on paper and did not betray any ideological bias, its implementation has become bogged down because he was trying to keep everything under Fretilin's control, including jobs in the civil service. The result has been a grossly underspent budget for 2005-2006 and a failure to build on what the UN prematurely left behind.

Mr Alkatiri's ultimate fate will be decided over the next few weeks as the political drama plays itself out. The father of three children may have his back to the wall, but no one is counting him out just yet.