

## **Council for Asia Europe Co-operation (CAEC)**

### **Comparing Experiences with State Building in Asia and Europe: The Cases of East Timor, Bosnia and Kosovo**

#### **A STATE IN THE MAKING:**

#### **The Role of UNTAET in East Timor**

*Author: Landry Haryo Subianto*

**DRAFT ONLY, NOT FOR QUOTATION!**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

For many decades, the East Timor questions have been very much at the heart of international diplomatic, as well as political debates. Surprisingly, the year 1999 saw an end to the twenty-four-year debates on the status of the eastern tip of Timor Island. The end itself came into being through a rather unpredictable—if not at all unimaginable decision of the Indonesian government under the then President Habibie. The essence of the decision is basically to give two options (Special Autonomy or Independent), between which the East Timorese could possibly choose through the so-called Popular Consultation or referendum under the UN supervision

On 5 May 1999, Portugal and Indonesia came to a comprehensive agreement on the future of the territory of East Timor. According to James Cotton (1999), ‘the agreement is in fact a culmination of an extended process, and one which for a long time seem destined not to succeed.’<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the agreement provided for a significant UN presence, requiring the UN to supervise a direct, secret, and universal ballot of the population of East Timor. Despite all efforts the UN had shown to tacitly respond to the rapid change of Indonesian government’s position and crucial role it played in managing the ballot (through United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor-UNAMET), political upheavals, which quickly followed by mass-organised violence and clashes between the pro-Jakarta militias versus the pro-Independent supporters could not be prevented.

The first major signs of crisis in the Indonesian sub-region began on August 30, 1999, following the nationally held referendum concerning the future status of East Timor. In the

---

<sup>1</sup> See James Cotton, ‘Peacekeeping’ in East Timor: An Australian Policy Departure *in Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, no. 3, 1999 pp. 237-246.

UN-organised vote, 98.6 percent of the eligible voters cast their ballots on August 30th, and 78.5 percent of the people of East Timor voted in favour of eventual independence. The violence, which followed the announcement of the vote, resulted in more than 75 percent of the entire population—estimated at about 800,000—being displaced.

Furthermore, many of the skilled East Timorese people fled the country, as did most of the senior and middle-level managerial, administrative, and professional personnel, mostly Indonesian. Roughly few hundreds—or as some estimated thousands—people were either killed or missing, and almost entire permanent buildings, be it private or public, were burnt and flattened during the so-called Operation Earth Scorch (*Operasi Sapu Bersih*) allegedly committed by the TNI-supervised pro-integration militias. In short, there was no sign of physical civilisation by the standards of existing infrastructures, and the land was basically destroyed and abandoned. Those who had been to East Timor after those series of devastating events would quickly agree that there was no building—let alone doctors or judges—left in the land that could be used, hired, or functioned.

It was in such a kind of situation that another UN mission—United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)—was established, and had to proceed with the mandate of Security Council promulgated in its Resolution no 1272. UNTAET literally replaced all pre-existing authorities in the territory.

Although UNTAET was fully equipped with a broad mandate to basically rebuild East Timor, and was authorised to govern the territory, which is widely seen as unprecedented in the history of UN mission, nevertheless the mission was immediately faced with difficult challenges. More than just reconstructing the physical infrastructures in East Timor, the immediate and critical tasks the Mission had to undertake are gaining people's confidence, as well as wrestling with some aggravating security problems, especially with the militias who had fled to the western part of the island. It is in that context that the existence and importance of UNTAET should be understood.

Therefore, departed from all grievances and horrible events the East Timorese had to live with, as clearly observed by James Traub (2000), today this 'impoverished island is the laboratory for an experiment in what is known at the United Nations as "nation-building". However, what makes the issue more interesting is because UNTAET is not a usual external player to the process of state building in East Timor. Indeed, as Traub reckons, "UNTAET is not just helping the new country's government—it is that government."<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, discussion presented in this paper is three folds. *Firstly*, it will describe and analyse the role of UNTAET in the process of state building in East Timor, including initial strategies and policy that UNTAET formulated towards the completion of its mission. Some major constraints and challenges that UNTAET is facing are also discussed in this section. *Secondly*, the paper attempts to assess the performance of the mission in the subsequent stage, especially on UNTAET's serious efforts to firmly bring peace to East Timor and to establish some embryonic governing institutions and mechanisms as major pre-requisites for

---

<sup>2</sup> See James Traub, 'Inventing East Timor' in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 4, July/August 2000 pp. 74-89

a modern country East Timor is expected to be. The role of NGO as an important element in the process of state building, including its relations with UNTAET, is also briefly discussed. *Lastly*, the paper highlights some lessons that can possibly be drawn from the mission's experience in East Timor, including the comparison with a more or less similar case of United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

## **II. UNTAET AS THE COORDINATOR OF STATE-DEVELOPERS:**

### **Missions and Strategies**

As it has been commonly known, UNTAET is a UN mission in East Timor operating under the Department of Peacekeeping Operations led by Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, a Brazilian who serves as the Special-Representative of Secretary-General (SRSG) and who had also served as the Acting Special Representative prior to the establishment of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Based on the Security Council Resolution no 1272 (1999), UNTAET is 'endowed with overall responsibility for the administration of East Timor, and empowered to exercise all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of justice'. Resolution 1272 also underlined that the mandate of UNTAET shall consist of the following elements: (a) To provide security and maintain law and order throughout the territory of East Timor; (b) To establish an effective administration; (c) To assist in the development of civil and societal services; (d) To ensure the co-ordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance; (e) To support capacity-building for self-government, and; (f) To assist in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the UNTAET mandate is broad, and based on the definition of peacekeeping a la UN, the various tasks that UNTAET has to perform can be categorised as a multi-dimensional peacekeeping.<sup>4</sup>

Contemplating on the spectrum of mandate, and possible resources the UN had to allocate, it is not an exaggeration to assume UNTAET a very "ambitious and complex" operation. It

---

<sup>3</sup> See Security Council Resolution 1272 (1999) adopted by the Security Council at its 4057<sup>th</sup> meeting on 25 October 1999 at UN site: <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/docs/9931277E.htm> accessed on May 30 2001 (11:12)

<sup>4</sup> See UN definition of Peacekeeping at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/field/pkeep.htm> accessed on August 13 2001 (14:06). Furthermore, as identified in the Brahimi Report, such a mission can also be determined as a peace-building operation, which is defined as 'activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war'. Thus, the Report concludes that peace-building includes but is not limited to reintegrating former combatants into civilian society, strengthening the rule of law (for example through training and restructuring of local police, and judicial and penal reform); improving respect for human rights through the monitoring, education and investigation of past existing abuses; providing technical assistance for democratic development (including electoral assistance and support for free media); and promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques. See *Report on the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations: A Far-Reaching Report by An Independent Panel (Brahimi Report)* at [http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace\\_operations/docs/part2.htm](http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/docs/part2.htm) accessed on August 13 2001 (13:45)

would be one of the largest and most costly missions that the UN had to undertake.<sup>5</sup> Recent data on the strength and budget of UNTAET seems to confirm the above presumption.

The size of the staffs, and budget allocated for the mission is in fact enormous. Personnel-wise, UNTAET was designed to incorporate three components, namely: administrative component; personnel responsible for humanitarian assistance and relief work, and; a military component. After 18 months in existence, the total strength of UNTAET (as of April 30, 2001) is 9,646 uniformed personnel (including 8,162 military, 1,360 civilian police and 124 military observers; supported by some 1,051 international civilian personnel and 1,928 local civilian staff. The appropriation for the period of July 2000 – June 2001 had reached US\$ 563 million (gross).<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, contrary to the strong international supports and generous financial assistance the UNTAET may enjoy, by the time the mission came to East Timor, there was nothing on the land. There was barely any building that the mission could utilise—let alone the able medical doctors, administration clerks, or judges. At the same time, it was also fully realised that public expectation on the field was excruciatingly high. Therefore, reflecting back to the initial condition when he started his job, the SRSG maintains the argument that “...we have to start from the scratch.”<sup>7</sup> He also admitted that the mandate given to UNTAET is “colossal”, and he had even stressed that given the circumstances “...it is impossible to establish a new administration, democratic institutions, restore public services and revive an economy in just over two years.”<sup>8</sup>

Building a state that properly functioned in just a couple of years might sound impossible, but laying the seed for state building is not a new thing for UN and its personnel. With that regard, it was observed that UNTAET (especially at its initial stage—first six months) had adopted a mixed-approach, ranging from approaching the local leaders to institutional-building by setting up institutions coherent with the overall aims and objectives of the mission. Such a general approach was indeed previously applied, most notably in Cambodia and Kosovo. But UNTAET could enjoy some modalities that UNTAC (Cambodia) could not. UNTAET was not burdened by the issue of legitimacy, and internal conflicts (belligerents). Although militias posed a serious threat to the mission, yet, the magnitude and danger was not as dangerous as in Cambodia, or Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Based on the UN’s experience in Kosovo, such a common strategy that likely to be applied in East Timor was largely incorporated or envisaged in at least four integrated phases:

1. Phase 1: The mission would set administrative structures, deploy international civilian police, provide emergency assistance for returning refugees and displaced people, restore public services and train local police and judiciary. In addition, with close co-

---

<sup>5</sup> See UNTAET News Archive, “Secretary-General Pledges Quick Action to Set Up Transitional Administration for East Timor” 25 October 1999 at <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/news/251099.htm> accessed on August 13, 2001 (13:41)

<sup>6</sup> See the East Timor-UNTAET Facts and Figures at <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/UntaetF.htm> accessed on May 30, 2001 (11:08)

<sup>7</sup> Interview, 19 July 2001 in Dili, East Timor.

<sup>8</sup> As quoted from UNTAET and the World Bank Press Release, *East Timor Moves from Emergency Reconstruction to Development Mode*, 15 June 2001.

operation with relevant institutions, it would also develop a phased economic recovery plan and reconstruction, and therefore seek to establish and develop a self-sustaining economy. At this stage, UNTAET would also facilitate, albeit in a very limited manner, the establishment of East Timorese provisional institutions, so that the East Timorese would have more opportunity to be involved in the state-building process, and thus, strengthening their sense of ownership to the process.

2. Phase 2: UNTAET would finalise preparations and conduct elections, as well as necessary political arrangement to ensure the success of elections.
3. Phase 3: based on the outcome and result of elections, UNTAET would help setting up the institutions necessary for democratic and autonomous self-government. In this regard, UNTAET would transfer its remaining administrative responsibilities while supporting the consolidation of East Timor post-election institutions.
4. Phase 4: as new institutions (especially the legislative-like one) reach a substantial decision on the date of independence as well as the state system and its supporting arrangements, thus, as an exit-strategy, the UN mission will be downsized to a very minimum scale, both in terms of personnel and responsibilities. However, realising that independence would not necessarily lead to a workable state-system especially on defence and economic sectors, thus, the presence of PKF and international institutions would be maintained for sometime after independence is announced.

#### ***Harmonising international efforts in Humanitarian Relief and Reconstruction.***

Perhaps one of the most challenging tasks that UNTAET is supposed to undertake is to co-ordinate (and integrate) various UN agencies, funds and programmes in the process of state-building. There are around twelve UN-related institutions that actively involves in the process of state-building in East Timor, whose jobs mainly deal with the reconstruction, repatriation, humanitarian relief, and capacity-building of East Timor. Although these institutions may share a relatively similar general objective, nevertheless, as they are “independent” in action, albeit close co-ordination, sometimes they opt for different strategies and framework. At this point, UNTAET, as promulgated by the resolution 1272 was primarily tasked to “harmonise” the various efforts of international communities and institutions in order to achieve efficient and co-ordinated results.

In this regard, UNTAET was fortunate because prior and just after its establishment, there were several studies undertaken by different institutions (most notably by the World Bank) as well as academic communities mostly on social and economic capacity assessment. One of these studies was the so-called Joint Assessment Missions (JAM), administered by the World Bank. Information gathered by, and recommendations proposed through the JAM were extremely useful.

As it was among the first field-study/assessment carried out just after the concerted violence took place in East Timor, and since the team comprised specialists from both international and East Timorese specialists, thus, JAM was able to identify the urgent needs of the people and the priority of reconstruction programs (including cost estimates) in order to look beyond a mere immediate post-conflict humanitarian needs as well as fostering the international commitment to the reconstruction processes in East Timor. The JAM addressed eight core sectors, namely: (1) community empowerment; (2) macroeconomic

management; (3) civil service; (4) judiciary; (5) agriculture; (6) education; (7) health, and; (8) infrastructure.<sup>9</sup>

As described by Sarah Cliffe, then Deputy Mission Leader of the JAM, the recommendations were taken to a donor meeting in Tokyo on 17 December 1999. As a matter of fact, the meeting (and the subsequent six-monthly donor meetings) was highly appraised, and seen as the innovative model of donor meeting because for the first time such a meeting was jointly (and relatively successfully) chaired by the World Bank and UN secretariat. Moreover, a lot of credits during the initial stage of the UNTAET presence should be addressed to this initiative, because the JAM and a series of Donor Meetings function as a media for consultation, dialogue, and co-ordination among donors, and between them and UNTAET and many other institutions. They also serve as a sort of “monitoring forum” for various institutions (both governmental and non-governmental) to the performance of UN mission in completing its first-ever attempt of state building. Through these series of meetings, the Transitional Administration, international donors, and people of East Timor can sit together and formulate some benchmarks and measures, and even timetable that can help ensuring the progress and success of mission. But on top of that, the meetings helped securing the financial flow and assistance, both to the general reconstruction and capacity building in East Timor or to the budget for the mission.

Realising the sheer magnitude of responsibility, and daunting challenges posed by the scale of works and difficulty in coordinating various agencies as well as balancing the speed and efficiency of delivery that the mission had to perform, the SRSG was then forced to formulate some priorities of the mission. Although many considered it as a little too late, yet, he could set those priorities, of which he presented in front of the Donor’s Meeting for East Timor in Tokyo on 17 December 1999, barely in just two-and-a-half month since he arrived in East Timor. The priorities are as follow: (1) to establish a mechanisms through which the most pressing political and technical decisions can be made jointly; (2) the settlement and (voluntary) return of all those who had fled East Timor; (3) re-establishment of law and order; (4) to continue to meet basic humanitarian needs and resume agricultural production which provides a livelihood for the vast majority of the population; (5) establishment of the civil service; (6) providing people with an opportunity to work to avoid longer-term reliance on external assistance, and; (7) human rights, justice and reconciliation. Indeed, with regard to priorities set by UNTAET, major revisions and corrections, including criticisms and inputs were made in each and every donor meetings, meaning that UNTAET over the course of state-building process did not always successful in either identifying the crucial issues, or dealing with developments and implementation taken place on the field.

***Transitional (Governing and) Administrative Authority.*** Parallel with the administrative authority of UNTAET to harmonise international efforts, UNTAET also performs a pivotal role as the transitional acting-government, and administrative authority of East Timor. It means that, as said earlier, UNTAET is tasked and authorised to govern the land and its population. What implies here is not just one branch of government, that is the

---

<sup>9</sup> See Sarah Cliffe, *The Joint Assessment Mission and the Reconstruction in East Timor* in James J. Fox, and Dionisio Babo Soares (eds), *Out of the Ashes: Destruction and Reconstruction of East Timor* (Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing, 2000) pp. 252-254.

executive, but also the legislative and judicial authority. UNTAET was by law the legal holder of East Timor's sovereignty, at least until the people of the land officially and peacefully declare their independence, a goal which serves as the ultimate agenda in the UNTAET strategy of state-building in East Timor.

Initially, it must be admitted, however, that UNTAET or SRSG himself even seemed to lack of vision as to what kind of structure, and mechanisms that UNTAET could possibly exercise in East Timor. As described earlier, like in its harmonising role of which co-ordination among UN-institutions and NGOs alike is the main challenge that UNTAET had to grapple with, the attempt to perform effective administrative role too needs a close co-operation with, and trust from local political leadership. The SRSG himself, upon arrival to Dili, was quick in forging a close personal relationship with the leaders of CNRT, especially with Xanana Gusmao. Ironically, prior to the establishment of UNTAET, Xanana Gusmao had submitted a proposal to the UN Secretary General for the future structure of transitional administration in East Timor, but his proposal received little support from the UN itself.<sup>10</sup>

Ideally, the Transitional Administration should have devised an administrative body, which proportionally consisted with able international personnel as well as local, simply because as promulgated in the mandate, the UN should "support the capacity building for self-government". However, this was not the case at the beginning of administrative development. According to some UN officials, it was simply because of the complicated bureaucratic procedures of the UN pertaining with the recruitment of local people and difficulty to find available (and able) personnel on the East Timorese side. Contrary to that view, many also reckoned that perhaps the insensitivity of the UN towards the expectation of East Timorese to be included in the administration structure had caused the initial structure of administration, which was almost exclusive from the local participants.

However, as described by Chopra, the problem was rooted in the circumstances of UNTAET's inception. He maintained the argument that the planning phase in New York involved no genuine contact with, or participation by, East Timorese representatives.<sup>11</sup> After so many embarrassments and long debates, the UN's unilateral decision not to include the Timorese in the planning of transitional administration structure quickly triggered public frustration in East Timor, and especially among the leaders of CNRT. The Timorese leaders strongly felt the need to reorganise themselves and began unilaterally to reconstitute its structure to the sub-district and even village levels. Soon, a virtual administrative gap quickly existed in the territory between the de jure UN authority and de facto CNRT's control over the land and people of East Timor. Although personal closeness between the SRSG and Xanana Gusmao had, to some extent, closed the gap, but the slowness of administrative as well as reconstruction developments, which reflected the inability of transitional administration, inevitably disillusioned the East Timor leadership.<sup>12</sup> Leaders of CNRT publicly expressed their dissatisfaction in a frequent manner.

---

<sup>10</sup> See Jarat Chopra, "The UN's Kingdom of East Timor", in *Survival*, Volume 42, Number 3, Autumn 2000, pp. 27-39

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

*The National Consultative Council.* Nevertheless, apart from the sluggishness the UNTAET had committed in its early days, the mission had been committed, albeit in reactionary, belated and limited mode, to accommodate the participation of as many elements within the East Timorese as possible. Having established the basic guidance for the operation of the mission, promulgated through the UNTAET Regulation no. 1999/1 (25 October 1999), De Mello also endorsed the establishment of a National Consultative Council (NCC) on December 2, 1999. The Council consisted of 15 members representing CNRT (7), political groups outside CNRT (3), Catholic church (1), and UNTAET (4) including the SRSG himself as the chairman. It is worth to note that after extended discussions between the pro-autonomy groups, and CNRT, and UNTAET's intercession, the inclusion of these groups into NCC was finally agreed. This was an important step on the path to reconciliation.

The main duty of the Council is to establish mechanisms for consulting with the East Timorese civil society, including religious groups, women, and youth.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the Council shall make policy recommendations on significant executive and legislative matters. To that purpose, the Council was also tasked to create joint sectoral committees covering several core sectors which are vital to the advancement of state-building process in East Timor. Nevertheless, as this council is consultative in nature, thus, every decision and recommendation passed by was 'accepted at de Mello's sufferance.'<sup>14</sup>

However, it was strongly felt that the Council suffered from communication and co-ordination problems. UDT leader Joao Carrascalao's complaint perhaps confirmed such an allegation. He publicly said that the workability of the Council was too dependent on the CNRT. Understandably, as an influential body, CNRT played a very pivotal role in the decision making process. Unfortunately, CNRT suffered from chronic internal miscommunication problems, and it affected the performance of the Council. Too many conflicting interests, coupled with the technical and legal unreadiness of CNRT to discuss important matters e.g. Timor Gap issue has weakened the Council.<sup>15</sup>

*Judicial System.* Following the establishment of the Council and in conjunction with the first mandate of UN Security Council, UNTAET also created a Transnational Judicial Service Commission<sup>16</sup> (as a precursor to the establishment of the Organisation of the Courts in East Timor on 6 March 2000<sup>17</sup>). Like the Council, and although the Commission is independent in action, however, membership of this commission is appointed by the SRSG. Contemplating on some tangible systemic and language difficulties should the Transitional Administration impose new legal system or adopt certain legal model from other country

---

<sup>13</sup> For details, see UNTAET Regulation No. 1999/2 On the Establishment of a National Consultative Council, 2 December 1999. It can be accessed at <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/untaetR/etreg2.htm> accessed on 24 August 2001 (19:06).

<sup>14</sup> See Chopra, "*The UN's Kingdom of East Timor*", p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> See BBC Monitoring Newsfile, '*Timor Politician Slams Poor Coordination in National Council*', 6 December 1999.

<sup>16</sup> See UNTAET Regulation No. 1999/3 On the Establishment of a Transnational Judicial Service Commission, on 3 December 1999, and it can be accessed at <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/untaetR/etreg2.htm> accessed on 24 August 2001 (19:06).

<sup>17</sup> UNTAET Regulation No. 2000/11 On the Organisation of Courts in East Timor.

(e.g. Australia), and noting that people are familiar with the Indonesian legal system, thus the Administration was determined to apply Indonesian legal system and regulation with some modifications. Although the legal system and court was, and is still considerably embryonic, but at least the basic foundation was in place already, and it has started to function properly.

*Governance and Public Service.* As outlined earlier, since the very beginning UNTAET decided not to integrate Timorese into its transitional structure, but rather to recruit locally a separate civil service.<sup>18</sup> Skilled and experienced Timorese were called and recruited and any skills-gaps were to be filled in by hiring many 'international experts'. As a first step to the creation of civil service, on 20 January 2000 the Transitional Administration enacted Regulation No. 2000/3 on the Establishment of a Public Service Commission (PSC), whose tasks and duties were almost similar to that of Judicial Service Commission.

PSC was designed to oversee the selection and recruitment of a new and supposedly leaner East Timorese civil service, including the setting up of administrative support arrangements (e.g. establishment of a payroll and payment system). The members of PSC were given opportunity to discuss the structure of civil service, its sectoral and total size, including the salary scale. Nevertheless, many observed that even after six month of existence, this commission was not fully functional partly because 'a national skills audit had not been conducted and no meaningful employment campaign had started.'<sup>19</sup> Apart from some contract-based employees, 'there were no Timorese in the rapidly growing UN government bureaucracy.'<sup>20</sup>

Complaints were increasingly aired from both Timorese leadership, and other international institutions, and also surprisingly from within UNTAET itself. The Timorese complained on the rather discriminatory way the UNTAET treated East Timorese who served as public officers. For the international bodies, especially those that were administering projects on the community empowerment, focus of criticisms were on the way the UNTAET run things on the ground, which was considered as too little too authoritarian. For the insiders, especially those who were so much frustrated with the lack of infrastructures administrative and under-capacity of local people to provide public service, major obstacle was found in the rigidity of UN's general regulation of resource allocation and usage. They were depressed knowing that they were not allowed to share some of the infrastructures they possessed in abundance with the poor Timorese as it would violate the so-called UN's regulation. But a more depressing fact was that at the initial stage, most of the UN personnel tended to apply those rules and regulations in the utmost rigidity, and left not much room for flexibility on the field.

*Overseeing the Security and Public Order.* For maintaining security and public order were among the highest priorities of UNTAET, thus, this task was carried out with the fullest attention the mission could pay. To everyone's surprise, security and order were relatively well managed, and maintaining security was considerably more successful than any other role the UNTAET was supposed to perform. As a matter of fact, much of the credits should be given to the previous Australian-led security mission (INTERFET). INTERFET is a

---

<sup>18</sup> See Chopra, "*The UN's Kingdom of East Timor*", p. 32

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

peace-enforcement operation, mandated to restore peace and security, to protect UNAMET, and facilitate humanitarian assistance before the arrival of the UN peacekeeping force.<sup>21</sup>

Despite some doubts over, and criticisms on the way INTERFET conducted its mission, which was considered as insensitive towards the Indonesian public sentiments and over-cautious in action (e.g. the way they check the civilian East Timorese on the streets), nevertheless INTERFET had been successful in restoring public order, and securing the land, especially on making a good and sound relationship with Indonesian military on the other side of the borders. They, in close co-operation with the Indonesian army, had been successful in preventing more bloodshed between the pro-integration militias and those who opted for independence.

In the subsequent days, UN Peacekeeping Force (UNPKF) replaced INTERFET, and resumed the security mission in East Timor. With current strength of over eight thousand troops from 31 countries and just over a thousand civilian police from 38 countries, their mission was mainly focused on maintaining the security and order as well as disarming the former pro-integration militias. However, despite a relatively positive degree of calmness and order, but violence and misunderstandings intermittently occurred, mostly between the militias and PKF. In late July and early August 2000, for instance, two PKF soldiers were killed in the exchange of shooting with militias in the villages near the border, and in late August representatives of UNHCR were deliberately attacked during a visit to West Timor. The latter incident had caused a rather strained relationship between the civilian UN mission with their military counterpart, partly because the former thought that the latter was not able to provide security protection and to disarm or arrest those responsible for the terror (militias).<sup>22</sup> Up until April 2001, the fatality of the mission was recorded to reach 16 personnel, most of them were the military (and others are civilian police and observers).

Given that circumstance, it is not surprising if the mission still regarded militias as an immediate threat to the security of East Timor.<sup>23</sup> As a matter of fact, former militias posed a serious implication not only on security *per se*, but also on the issue of reconciliation. At this point, the Transitional Administration's support for reconciliation, including its approach toward Indonesian elite to establish some co-operative mechanisms in disarming and arranging the repatriation of the former militias, and putting those who were responsible for the post-Election fiasco on trial, was seen as inconclusive and thus heavily criticised. Despite the fact that they had been active in making bilateral talks over the RI-East Timor borders, including the possible arrangement for the Oecussi enclave, many felt that the UN could not do a better job on reconciliation. Reconciliation and its ramifications became more difficult to be accelerated under UNTAET partly because the process itself had been very much exacerbated by either lack of UNTAET's persuasion to both Indonesia and the militias on this particular issue, or the absence of sincere political-will from both Jakarta and the militias

---

<sup>21</sup> See UNSC 1999 as quoted from Sue Downie, *The United Nations in East Timor: Comparisons with Cambodia* in Damien Kingsbury, *Guns and Ballot Boxes: East Timor's Vote for Independence* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 2000) p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> See Katsumi Ishizuka, "UNTAET: Some Current Issues" in *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, Vol. 29, No. 5/6, Sep-Dec 2000, pp. 5-7, accessed from <http://www.umi.com>

<sup>23</sup> Interview with SRSRG Sergio Veira de Mello in Dili on 19 July 2001

towards the reconciliation and tribunal initiatives. Nevertheless, despite a very slow progress, things are moving ahead on its track, although there was no indication as to how these issues are going to be reconciled in a peaceful and effective manner.

### **III. MANAGING A WIDER AND DEEPER LOCAL INVOLVEMENT: Moving toward A Better Direction?**

#### ***Accelerated Timorisation: A Reactionary Response Towards A Growing Public Discontent***

Having established basic institutions as pre-requisites for governance in East Timor, UNTAET was again challenged by some criticisms coming from inside the mission, as well as from the East Timorese people. Most of them complained about the working environment the UN had created in East Timor. A personnel from a UN agency clearly mentioned that “working environment within the mission is very competitive and unfriendly.”<sup>24</sup> For the “insiders”, lack of clear and attainable directions from either their superiors or other departments, and rigidity of UN mechanism and decision making process, had created a serious credibility crisis. These people fully realised that they are—and will always be—under a tight and constant public scrutiny, and without any clear guidance, misunderstandings frequently took place. As a result, public tend to see them as incompetent, and unreliable, yet expensive “international experts”.

At this point, ‘comparisons with colonial administrations were unavoidable, and affirmed by various forms of segregation between expatriates and the Timorese’.<sup>25</sup> As a matter of fact, several months earlier, Xanana Gusmao had strongly demanded that “international civilian administrators should be deployed in a very selective way, to provide skills not available in East Timor, and with explicit plans to train East Timorese staff to replace them.”<sup>26</sup>

For the East Timorese, UNTAET’s reluctance to include East Timorese as legitimate shareholder in the state-building process had been seen as a form of UN insensitivity towards local aspirations, and some even perceived it as an insult. A very limited window of opportunity that the mission had provided for the local people to join the administration had inevitably created a deep frustration.<sup>27</sup> Coupled with the widening social and economic gaps between those who worked and who did not work for UN mission—let alone the emerging dual-economy between the expatriates and local—resentment against the mission was rapidly built. As Traub tacitly observed, “the most logical target of resentment in East Timor these days is not the militias, which are gone, but UNTAET, which is omnipresent and well-nigh omnipotent.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Interview with a UN officer in Dili on 20 July 2001

<sup>25</sup> See Chopra, “*The UN’s Kingdom of East Timor*”, p. 33

<sup>26</sup> Speech of CNRT President Xanana Gusmao at the Donors’ Meeting for East Timor in Tokyo, 17 December 1999.

<sup>27</sup> In his speech at the Donors’ Meeting in Lisbon, 22-23 June 2000, de Mello stated that UNTAET were very much aware of the frustrations of the East Timorese people, especially at the slow progress in reconstruction and development. He also admitted that these frustrations, combined with inability of UNTAET to explain clearly some of the difficulties and dilemmas UNTAET had faced, had led to “occasional misunderstandings” between UNTAET and the Timorese.

<sup>28</sup> See James Traub, “*Inventing East Timor*” p. 84-85

Faced with such an amounting public discontent, UN officials seemed to have no creative solution to the problem. They, however, was right in identifying that one of the most crucial problems that needed to be solved immediately was the problem of incorporating East Timorese to the public administration structure. In April 2000, de Mello reacted and announced his intention to accelerate the “Timorisation” process by appointing Timorese deputies of central departments and district offices. However, his promise of doing so in a matter of weeks proved unrealistic. In subsequent days, he maintained an argument that it was so extremely difficult to find able and available East Timorese to be included in the transitional administration.<sup>29</sup> Such a crisis-driven decision was received with mixed-feelings, especially by all 13 UN district administrators. One of the reasons was simply because these administrators saw such a strategy as ‘outside any broader integration strategy’ in which transparency and democratic selection should be the principle’.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, all these tensions within the transitional administration proved nothing but the fact that the speed of delivery, and democratic principles needed to be reconciled through a very delicate mechanism of which the UN mission did not possess.

During the months of May and June, the transitional administration was constantly bombarded by demands of power-sharing. As a result, de Mello reacted again in June proposing the expansion of the NCC and a plan for co-governance in which East Timorese would hold cabinet posts for all portfolios other than foreign affairs, defence, justice and finance. The proposed alternatives were technocratic or political models,<sup>31</sup> and the CNRT welcomed the political model. This, however, does not include executive power-sharing of transitional administrator as stipulated in resolution 1272.

*The National Council.* A new National Council commenced its role as the first ever all-East Timorese legislative assembly on 23 October 2000.<sup>32</sup> However, it was established based on the UNTAET Regulation no.2000/24 on The Establishment of A National Council on 14 July 2000, and appointed to replace the former 15 member-NCC which was a quasi-cabinet and quasi-legislative body established in December 1999. According to its initial regulation, the Council shall consist of thirty-three East Timorese representing political parties (inside and outside CNRT), religious groups, civic organisations, and districts (all 13). However, in the subsequent practice, the number was expanded to 36. In its first session, Xanana Gusmao was elected Speaker of the Council. The Council has seven standing committees, which correspond to the Cabinet portfolios. The Council was planned

---

<sup>29</sup> See Chopra, “*The UN’s Kingdom of East Timor*”, p. 33

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Actually, in order to further involve the Timorese people in the administration of their country, the SRSG had suggested a new transitional government structure to the East Timorese leaders during a week-long conference held in May. One option was a technocratic model, by which the administration would be staffed with East Timorese working alongside international staff. The second option was a political model, whereby a cabinet of “ministers” would be formed and East Timorese leaders would share power and responsibility for government in coalition with UNTAET. See UNTAET, “East Timor Update”, July 2000 p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> See UNTAET and the World Bank, Background Paper for Donors’ Meeting on East Timor, Brussels, 5-6 December 2000, p. 5.

to work just until the campaigning period (July 2001) of incoming election, which was to be held in August 2001.

Based on its legal foundation, the Council shall have the power: (1) to initiate, to modify, and to recommend draft regulations; (2) to amend regulations, and; (3) at the request of a majority of the Council, to require the appearance of Cabinet Officers appointed pursuant to UNTAET Regulation no 2000/23 to answer questions regarding their respective functions. However, despite those broadened powers, the Transnational Administrators shall approve a draft regulation or amendment endorsed by the Council upon the recommendation of the Cabinet where, in his sole discretion, the draft regulation is consistent with the fulfilment of his mandate under SC Resolution no 1272 (1999).

From the above description, it is clear that the Council acts as legislative body. However, like its harbinger, the NCC, the Council seemed to suffer from a very serious communication problem, not only with its external partners such as the executive branch, but also among its members. Although the Council was able to endorse or formulate some legislative initiatives, nevertheless, it could not be able to become a self-interlocutor for various different views and interests of its members.

The resignation of its Speaker on 23 March 2001 was seen as the peak of internal conflict in the Council. According to Mr Gusmao, his resignation was purely driven by his own principle. As the chairman of political committee, he believed that people, during the incoming campaign period to elect member of Constituent Assembly, has rights to know what constitute a constitution. As he reiterated, people cannot go blind and elect something they do not understand. Thus, he proposed a draft regulation that can be employed as guidance for the National Constituent Committee. But this initiative was harshly opposed and even allegedly seen as a political manoeuvre.<sup>33</sup> Reaching consensus was difficult, especially as admitted, in the situation in which democratic mentality was yet well planted in the day-to-day politics.<sup>34</sup>

*The East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA)*. According to the Report of the Secretary General on UNTAET (July 2000-January 2001), it was noted that ETTA (established on 7 August 2000, based on the UNTAET Regulation no. 2000/23 dated on 14 July 2000) was meant to 'integrate East Timorese into all major decision-making areas within the Administration'. Although initially it was planned that East Timor would hold all portfolios except foreign affairs, defence, justice, and finance, nevertheless, the final composition of the ETTA Cabinet (until before the August election) was as follows: (1) Five Timorese were appointed to hold five portfolios—Foreign Affairs, Internal Administration, Infrastructure, Economic Affairs, and Social Affairs; (2) International staffs from UNTAET hold four other departments—Police and Emergency Services, Justice, Political and Constitutional Affairs, and Finance. In addition to those departments, ETTA also consists several Timorese to lead some key offices/agency, including the Office of Inspector General, and the National Planning and Development Agency, an agency that was considered as important in formulating the development strategy, including the capacity building of the

---

<sup>33</sup> See "Interview with Xanana Gusmao" in Tempo weekly magazine, 29 April 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

future independent East Timor. Most of these ministers and high officials were chosen from the Diaspora of East Timor resistance (FRETILIN).

ETTA has also organised language training, and induction programmes as well as computer, governance and public management courses, attended by more than 1,500 people, including the political leaders and senior officials. It has also established a special unit to expedite the replacement of international staff with qualified East Timorese civil servants. In this regard, ETTA was confronted with the challenge posed by the need for rapid recruitment, on the one hand, and necessity of maintaining transparency and quality on the other.

Apart from the fact that ETTA had provided larger window of opportunity for the East Timorese to comprehend, formulate, co-ordinate, and partly determine the path, priority and strategy of development, nevertheless, it still merely functioned as “the vehicle” for capacity building prior to the full-administrative hand-over. ETTA was then immediately challenged by several constraints, mostly related with the capacity building efforts. As identified in the Background Papers for Donors’ Meeting in Brussels (December 2000) and Canberra (2001), there are three main hindrances facing the advancement of ETTA. These constraints are: (1) lack of an overarching plan to co-ordinate capacity building initiative; (2) slow recruitment, and hence inability to complete full training needs analysis or start capacity building for the management levels, and; (3) language constraints which mitigate against on-the-job transfer of skills from international staff.

Although the NPDA had been properly assigned to co-ordinate all capacity-building efforts, nevertheless, plans should also be demand-driven from the departments, who best understand their own training needs. Unfortunately, many departments did not have sufficient Timorese managers to generate and verify job-descriptions. Most of them especially those who used to work for bureaucracy under Indonesia, could not fully comprehend the nature of shorter chain of command the UN tried to implement. They always urged for constant guidance of which the UNTAET/ETTA had no time to formulate. Solving that problem was not easy, as in the meantime, supply of qualified candidate for senior positions might not be sufficient in all sectors. Actually, there had been no major difficulty in attracting qualified candidates at the lower levels, but it has not been as easy at the senior levels (level 5-7), and ETTA is still formulating the best solution to those problems. However, it is worth to note that until January 2001, ETTA has hired nearly 7,000 of the 10,554 civil servants projected for the fiscal year 2000/01.

Another problem that seemed to be minor, but very critical, is the working language used among local and international staffs. ‘The barrier is no less with oral communication, as most international staffs do not speak a language of East Timor’ (either Indonesia or Tetum), although Traub (2000) notes that they are fluent in other four or five languages. ‘This limits participation by East Timorese in day-to-day activities such as meetings, planning discussions and general supervision, hampering capacity of development efforts’.<sup>35</sup> One

---

<sup>35</sup> See UNTAET and the World Bank, Background Paper for Donors’ Meeting on East Timor, Canberra, 14-15 June 2001, p. 15-16.

officer from UN agencies mentioned that provided the circumstances, it is not surprising if “international advisors run things” in departments.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, due to its limitations, ETTA could not always deliver things that had been promised to the people. For instance, it could not yet provide a sea-transportation (ferry) from Oecussi enclave to Dili port, while negotiation with the Indonesian authority to have a “safe-land-corridor” through Indonesian territory also seemed to go nowhere.<sup>37</sup>

Despite all shortcomings of ETTA, this transitional administration, however, had been relatively successful in at least addressing several key sectors through its sector program approach as outlined in the SRSG speech at the Donors Meeting in Brussels. It had been able so far to deal with the finance/budget issue, as well as managing foreign affairs concerning with East Timor relationships with Indonesia and Australia. In preparing East Timor for independence, ETTA had played a pivotal role in addressing as well as establishing and strengthening defence institution, justice system, repatriation mechanism, police, infrastructure, land issues settlement, border control, economic affairs including agriculture, and obviously health and education.

The success of last election on August 30 to elect 88 members of the Constitutional Assembly, in which Fretilin party came out as the majority winner by winning 55 seats (62%), really paved the way for the next step towards independence. UNTAET will likely downsize its current strength—if not completely pull out in just several months after independence, except its PKF and Civpol. If thing goes as scheduled, then, we can expect to see the Assembly accomplish their duties (crafting the constitution and other important arrangements e.g. date of independence, system of state etc) within the next 90 days. And after the establishment of government, ETTA will transform itself into a fully functioning government of East Timor, and inherit all executive powers the UNTAET previously held. At this point, UNTAET will strictly serve as advisor, or “gap-filler” to the incoming government on several sectors where the government is lack of able personnel.

***Relationship with the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):  
Competitive or Co-operative?***

From the very beginning, NGOs have been always considered as an integral part of state-building process in East Timor. During the Indonesian period, they were well-known to be among the staunchest proponents of the East Timor independence. UNTAET also fully recognises the importance of NGOs as partner and stakeholders of the development in East Timor. An organisation called the NGO Forum has recorded that there are 110 international and 150 national NGOs that have been officially incorporated with the Forum. It reflects not only the fact that NGOs on East Timor were great in number, but they also possess the ability to co-ordinate activities among themselves, and to create a workable and solid network. Their activities and advocacy posed significant impacts on the development programs.

---

<sup>36</sup> Interview with UN officers in Dili, 20 July 2001

<sup>37</sup> Interview with NGO activist in Dili, 20 July 2001.

In general, like NGOs elsewhere, the roles and agenda the NGOs in East Timor exercise are as follows: (1) acting as a means of check and balance to the government, and monitoring the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of development programs; (2) promoting democracy and community empowerment through intensive public education and campaigns; (3) advocating some critical individual and communal problems, most notably the violation of human rights, and injustice; (4) building up a strong and workable networking, not only among the national and international NGOs, but also a network with the government, and business alike. In short, it can be concluded that NGOs help the strengthening, and capacity building of the country as a whole.<sup>38</sup>

With regards to the NGOs-Government relationship, it is observed that in general the two are mutually interdependent as they both are strive for a more or less similar interest and objective. But it is quite understandable if they sometimes opt for different strategy and approach in pursuing their own respective objectives. For instance, with its prosaic bureaucratic culture, the Government tends to adopt a procedural approach, which can be very complicated and slow. On the contrary, NGOs are more flexible and informal in executing its policy, although it must be admitted that such flexibility and informality sometimes risk the accountability. This situation had created a common impression that government and NGOs cannot work together, as they also constantly exchange criticisms towards each other.

Initially, according to the NGO Forum, some NGOs work alongside the Government, as is the case with NGOs working in health, or water and sanitation, where the government does not have enough resource to finance these sections,<sup>39</sup> or considered as less politically important. Other NGOs, however, work quite independently from the Government, especially in agriculture, environment, education, capacity-building, social welfare, human rights, and media sectors. These are sectors of which the government is lack of vision as to how the program should be administered and managed so that people will maximally benefit from it. And it is in these sectors competitions—even conflicts frequently occurred between UNTAET/ETTA (or other official UN and international institutions) and NGOs. Indeed, there is no clear-cut standard or hint that motivates NGOs to become close partners of, or staunchest critics towards the Government, *vice versa*.

Regardless their position *vis-a-vis* the Government, NGOs are normally critical in evaluating and assessing the progress of development in the territory. One of their criticisms towards the UN missions is that these missions, especially UNTAET, are too concerned about—even obsessed by—the formal independence of East Timor, and they seemed to be so rush in leaving the country once the independent date is agreed. Actually, many expect the missions would be more relaxed and more people oriented rather than being too overwhelmed by their own legal and political agenda.

Moreover, NGOs' critical evaluation, assessments, proposals, initiatives, and recommendations on several sectors submitted to the Donors' Meetings had helped the

---

<sup>38</sup> See *East Timor NGO Information Booklet for June 2001* published by the East Timor National NGO Forum

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*

international community and donors in identifying and understanding the shortcomings, as well as achievements of the Mission. In the end, such a critical attitude had posed a very positive impact on the state-building process in East Timor.

Indeed, we just cannot always view NGOs and Government in a diametral or black-and-white position. There were in fact several cases in which the NGOs proposed very stimulating and sensible initiatives, and received a full support from the Government. The success of Civic Education program was perhaps one example of how Government and NGOs could closely work together, and become successful. With intensive communication and an open-minded attitude from both Transitional Administration and NGOs, some initial hurdles can be overcome, and differences can be reconciled.

On the contrary, education is perhaps one of the most complex problems in which relations between the Government and NGOs (and also the Church) are yet harmonious. According to some NGOs dealing with education sector, the rather authoritarian attitude of the Government prevented them from working closely, and co-operatively with the Government. Even in some extreme circumstances, the Government could easily stop the NGOs activity simply by stopping their financial and technical supports. Thus, it is difficult to claim that NGOs and Government are either in absolute synergy or friction, because they are mutually interdependent towards each other.

#### **IV. SOME LESSONS LEARNED: Agenda for the Future**

From the description above, it is clear that given the unfortunate circumstances, the UN has been doing a formidable job in the making of East Timor as an independent state. Indeed, if we judge its performance by the standards of what people expect, thus, the UN mission is not performing as well as people had expected. There are some criticisms towards the way the UN undertakes its duty and responsibility, especially on the sluggish progress and mistakes the UNTAET had committed in its first six months of existence. But it must be admitted that the UNTAET had been able to improve its overall performance, deliverability, and relationships not only with the other international organisations and donors, but more importantly its relations with the people and leaders of East Timor.

Furthermore, there are some lessons that can be learned—or compared—from the experience of UNTAET. Basically, these lessons can be categorised into two broad themes, namely: (1) UN's lessons for the Peacekeeping organisational development—as it had been formulated through the Brahimi Report, and; (2) Lessons for the international co-operation on state-building process.

On the lessons for the next possible peacekeeping operation, the UNTAET's experience in East Timor, however, shares some similarities with that of the UNTAC in Cambodia. First, 'intense efforts should be made to reduce the delay between a negotiated settlement and deployment of subsequent mission, and its associated mechanisms and infrastructure. UN peacekeeping operations should 'hit the ground running' and be prepared to take control immediately. UNTAET's, as well as UNTAC's, sluggishness in taking control of the territory was one of the biggest flaws of the East Timor mission.' There was a period of

discontinuity between UNAMET and UNTAET, and in subsequent stage, such a discontinuity was reinforced by frequent turnover of personnel.

As also the case of UNTAC, 'the inadequacy of its advance planning affected UNTAET for the whole of its life cycle. Apart from the lack of capacity at UN Headquarters, advance planning was hindered by a disjunction between the negotiation at the Security Council and their implementation. All the senior leadership-designate of peacekeeping mission should be involved, where possible, in the negotiation and planning phases leading up to deployment'. The SRSG agreed that planning was a very critical issue that determines the success of certain mission, and he admitted that UN mission in East Timor did not have a good and comprehensive one. In security field, he noted that international intervention in East Timor began with a Multi-National Force and led from within the region (Australia). This was swiftly followed by its transition into a more orthodox PKF. Such transitions are indeed rarely easy, but in this case it was flawless, and the reason was simply because UNTAET was not equipped to deal with a transformation on this scale. Rather, the mission was almost entirely dependent on "blue-bereted" MNF officers seconded to the UN for its implementation. In the future, initial UNPKF should contain strong planning and logistics cells, and the Secretariat should begin advance planning of these operations with key potential partners to lay down blueprints and contingency plans for possible future transitions.<sup>40</sup>

In the civil and political transition, the UN mission was also challenged by the fact that resolution 1272 did not provide the mission an instruction manual, and comprehensive plan. The SRSG admitted that approach adopted from the outset would not work. He actually planned to Timorise only the civil service with the delay on political transition just until the election or well before independence. Meanwhile, consultation with a selected few would suffice. It became clear, however, that consultation was insufficient, and thus, the mission accelerated the Timorisation process. On the one hand, he was asked to Timorise and delegate authority to the local population. On the other hand, the mission was also told that the funds allocated to UNTAET for this purpose could not go to the administration established! Therefore, the future UN missions would be constantly challenged by the question of how far or fast can the UN accelerate the power-sharing with local people.

The next critical lesson for the future UN mission is on the good mission governance, not only on the establishment of accountable, efficient and corruption-free ambience within the mission, but also on how the mission can be discipline and consistent in implementing its own rule of the game and law. In East Timor, corruption has been becoming a major issue. But equally critical is the issue of impunity. There were several unlawful acts committed by UN personnel i.e. sexual harassment, and traffic accidents, and no significant attention has been given on these matters. If the UN is about to retain people's trust and its credibility, thus, it must be able to find a firm and consistent solution to these types of problems.

---

<sup>40</sup> As quoted from presentation by Sergio Vieira de Mello, "Views from the Field: UN Missions Response" at the UNITAR-IPS-JIIA Conference on The Reform of United Nations Peace Operations: Debriefing and Lessons (Singapore, 2 April 2001).

Finally, on a specific administrative matter, it must be admitted that UN financial and administrative procedures were complex and time-consuming. This had been one of the obstacles the UNTAC faced in Cambodia, but then, it repeatedly took place again in East Timor. Thus, greater delegation of financial authority and faster and more flexible procurement procedures would all have helped the functioning of UNTAET's administration.

Personnel-wise, the UN missions must develop a transparent and accountable recruitment procedure, which allows them to select people with skill and commitment. The recruitment system should also accommodate a smoother transfer of skills from international staffs to the local people who will run things after the mission is ceased. In that regard, the UN should consider the strategy to transfer the skills and knowledge of international staff to its local partners. In East Timor, it is found that the staffs who originally were not government employees often complained that their bureaucrats colleagues were very reluctant in "educating" their local partners, so the transfer of knowledge did not work well. On the contrary, these bureaucrats seconded to the mission often accused their non-bureaucrat colleagues as "not having sufficient experience and skills" in running public affairs".<sup>41</sup> Thus, personnel backgrounds really matter at this point since backgrounds would determine personnel's way of thinking and action.

In an emergency situation or at the initial stage where the time for co-ordination and adjustment is a luxury the mission does not possess, perhaps it is preferable if the UN recruits its personnel in a "team-package", that is a team of experts/personnel from certain country/organisations that technically specialised on specific duties e.g. health, agriculture, budget and so forth. Several cases in East Timor confirmed the fact that Team-approach might yield a better result in a shorter period of time.

Henceforth, new recruitment procedures should not necessarily contradict the general quota-basis principle of UN, because as many people reckon, the case of East Timor is quite unique, and it may not happen again in the future. Therefore, it does not pose an immediate impact on the overall mechanism of the UN. However, still the UN should establish alternative or ad hoc procedures and mechanisms that can be temporarily applied in special circumstances. In short, the UN must develop a more sophisticated conception of the operation of multifunctional missions. The improvisation that characterised much of UNTAET's performance, noble though it may have been, cannot fully be the basis for future UN exercise in nation-building, if any.

With regards to the lessons for the international co-operation on state-building process, it must be admitted that co-ordination is the most difficult problem. To avoid duplication of efforts, and lack of synergy among various missions in East Timor, a better strategic co-ordination is needed between the components of large multi-purpose UN missions. Continued and close communications between the co-ordinator of mission, and other UN missions, donor countries and NGOs should be maintained at all cost. In the case of UNTAET, the Donors' Meetings would be good examples of how numerous missions,

---

<sup>41</sup> Interview with the Budget Officer of ETTA in Dili, 20 July 2001.

countries, and groups can be harmonised, and can collectively discuss, monitor, and set the various programs, benchmarks and assessments necessary for the success of the whole objectives. This model should be implemented in the future missions.

Lastly, international community should also bear in mind that the official independence of the country would not automatically end the process of state-building in East Timor. The country will continually need supports from various countries, international organisations, both private and public. The East Timorese has energy and spirit to build their country, but only with strong supports and commitments of international society can the East Timorese build their nation in a democratic way.