

Narrative for the UW International Institute and Scott Kloeck-Jensen Fellowship
On Pre-Dissertation Research in East Timor, August 15-28

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Unfortunately, this story begins in Bali, Indonesia on May 19. It was on May 20, East Timor's independence day, that I was to transit from Denpasar to Dili, but Indonesian immigration officials at the Bali Airport had different ideas. Although I was traveling with an official document issued by the Indonesian Foreign Ministry authorizing me to travel freely in that nation, an arrest and deportation from occupied East Timor in 1997 was used to prevent my passage.

On November 12, 1991 I had been the only foreigner to witness a student demonstration commemorating the 1991 Dili massacre. I was subsequently arrested and charged with "journalism," interrogated for 24 hours, deported and black listed in Indonesia. After the democratization of Indonesia, during the tenure of Abdurrahman Wahid, then U.S. Ambassador Bob Gelbard assisted me in lifting the ban. I have several theories as to the political reasons for this obstruction, but the bottom line is I was escorted all the way back to San Francisco (by Eva Air personnel serving as security for the Government of Indonesia). Of course, I was profoundly disappointed to miss the independence celebrations in East Timor, however, I was able to return to complete my research later in the summer when the euphoria had lifted and everyone seemed to have more time for discussion.

Having exhausted a good part of my fellowship funding on this aborted attempt to reach East Timor, I postponed my research plans until August. In the meantime I gathered what additional assistance I could to supplement remaining funds from the Scott Kloeck-Jensen Fellowship. Because of this unusual situation, I have not attached a separate financial report at this time. But I will be pleased to provide you with any further financial information you require.

I finally arrived in East Timor on August 15, via Darwin Australia.

During my stay in the capital of Dili I resided with friends Ceu and Juan Federer, who coordinate the largest indigenous aid agency in East Timor, Timor Aid. They generously allowed me to use their home as my base for two weeks of steady meetings and interviews. (I also traveled to Dare and Manatutu during my stay.)

I was privileged to have access to several layers of East Timorese society—individuals in all three branches of government, East Timorese NGO activists, members of international aid agencies, and non-political East Timorese citizens.

During this time I met with the following East Timorese individuals and organizations: Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta; Paula Pinto, Elizabeth Exposto and Inez Almeida of the Office of the President Xanana Gusmao; East Timor's Ambassador to the U.S. and

UN Jose Luis Gutierrez; Director of Regional Affairs Roberto Soares; Jose Labato and other parliamentarians; National Sports Director Joao Carrascalao; Emilia Pires of the National Department of Planning; Judge Cirito Jose Cristouao; Palmira Pires, Director of the East Timor Development Agency; Joao Saldanha, Executive Director of the East Timor Study Group; Sr. Maria Lourdes; Isabel Galhos, Director of Civic Education Program for the UN Development Program; members of legal foundation Yayasan HAK; members of the women's organization FOKUPERS; members of the monitoring project La'o Hamutuk; and Felicidade Gutierrez, Program Officer for the World Bank.

Additionally, I met with the following foreigners and international organizations: Jim Della-Giacoma, Resident Representative for the National Democratic Institute; Barbara Smith, Resident Representative for the International Republican Institute; Shari Villarosa, U.S. Charge d'Affaires (pending appointment of our first Ambassador to East Timor); employees of USAID; Elke Ender, Project Advisor for Just World Partners (UK); Dr. Dan Murphy, Director of the Bairo Pite Clinic; Dr. Tom Hyland (Ireland); Fr. Tom Jacobs (Indonesia); Carolyn Robinson, former Director of Television for East Timor; Anthony Goldstone, formerly with UNAMET, current Coordinator of UNMASET; Rick Kern, formerly with UNAMET, currently with UNMASET; Natacha Meden and Elizabeth Huybens, Director of East Timor Programs for the World Bank.

As I described in my original pre-dissertation research, I initially intended to focus my attention on two key issues pertaining to the United Nations role in East Timor in May and August/September 1999, before and immediately following the successful vote for independence. In fact I did interview widely on several key questions:

Regarding the May 5 Agreement

- 1) What did the interviewee believe were the main factors contributing to the United Nations' inability to prevent referendum-period violence in August/September 1999? (All interviewed named the UN-brokered May 5 Agreement between Portugal and Indonesia or its security annex as one of the greatest if not the greatest contributing factor, often citing it as "the fatal flaw" in the referendum process.)
- 2) What conditions, actors and processes led to the decision (included in the security annex) to allow Indonesian armed forces to maintain responsibility for security during the referendum period? (Here answers varied widely, but placing primary blame on Portuguese, U.S. and Indonesian governments, and expressing little surprise that UN negotiators were incapable of altering a state-power-dominated outcome.)
- 3) How might any of these factors have been changed sufficiently to prevent this "fatal flaw?" (Again, answers varied from "nothing" to detailed description of contingency plans that could have been included in the security annex.)

Regarding the UN Exodus following the Referendum

- 4) Was there a real or perceived promise on the part of UNAMET to remain and provide protection to the East Timorese should they agree to the referendum process? (The overwhelming majority answered emphatically yes.)
- 5) If UNAMET had not evacuated the majority of its personnel, could the Indonesian-backed militia and armed forces devastation have been prevented? (Because this required speculation, answers were less clear.)
- 6) In your mind, what caused the UN to pull out? (A remarkable degree of sympathy for UNAMET was demonstrated in the answers to this question; most moved blame back to May 5.)

Many other questions were asked in follow-up to the above. Since I have yet to interview several key UN players, including Ian Martin and Tamrat Samuel, it is too early to draw broad conclusions. However, preliminary ideas center on ways in which to avoid half-hearted commitments and unintended promises in areas of severe conflict in the future. These include the imminent importance of adequate mandate for UN field personnel to carry out their assigned mission (in this case preparing for and holding a referendum in a safe environment). Contingency plans (preparing for dominant power reactive violence *must* be made. Mission priorities (and general UN rules) must also be explained to avoid critically false expectations. These conclusions support those of others who have recently critiqued UN peacekeeping operations in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia.

Additionally, and unexpectedly, this research trip allowed me the time and space in which to reevaluate my preliminary dissertation plans. As a result, after long discussions with various East Timorese leaders and international workers, I have decided to utilize my close connection with newly independent East Timor and base my first area of comparative study there (instead of Aceh province, Indonesia, with which I am relatively less familiar). My second set of study remains the Democratic Republic of Congo. I have also begun to narrow myself to three potential areas of research. These are:

- 1) political economy (re-development after long periods of devastating internal repression); or
- 2) the relationship between civil society (mainly NGOs) and government in developing nations recovering from violent conflict—both in stabilizing democratic institutions and ensuring the protection of human rights; and/or
- 3) the influence of international organizations (particularly the UN) and bilateral relations (particularly the U.S.) affecting transitions from repression to democracy.

I realize that this is a departure, both geographically and thematically, from that which I proposed in the spring. I am thankful for the opportunity afforded me by the Scott Kloeck-Jensen Fellowship to examine my initial ideas more closely. It has allowed me to return to the nation of my first intense political involvement, and to realize what I see as most relevant to its newly independent in their nation-building and democratization project. It is the combination of personal proximity to and knowledge of this nation that will contribute to my best comparative work in Africa, in juxtaposition to East Timor.

Budget → Because of 2 attempts to get there, money was mostly spent on plane fare