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Donald E. Weatherbee

University of South Carolina - Columbia, donald.e.weatherbee@verizon.net

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PORTUGUESE TIMOR: AN INDONESIAN DILEMMA

DONALD E. WEATHERBEE

Out of the clamor and heat of Sukarno's Indonesia's confrontation with the "Old Established Forces" emerged an image of a revolutionary Indonesian foreign policy determinedly revisionist and implacably opposed to the maintenance or extension of Western power and influence in the Afro-Asian sphere. Sukarno's Indonesian Revolution was "actively opposed to, and hitting hard at, all forms of imperialism and colonialism wherever they occur."¹ Indonesia did not refrain from acts calculated to upset the status quo in Southeast Asia, and indeed justified them in terms of its anti-imperialist ideology. Yet, at the same time that Indonesia was claiming its place in the vanguard of the "New Emerging Forces," it accepted the tangible presence of traditional imperialism on its own doorstep. Indonesia, the most aggressively anti-imperialist political unit in South Asia, is contiguous with, surrounds, and peacefully coexists with one of the two anachronistic vestiges of Portuguese Asian empire—Portuguese Timor (the other fragment being, of course, Macao).

D. G. E. Hall, surveying the impermanence of Portuguese dominance in Asia, wrote "Yet when all has been said regarding the moribund state of the Portuguese empire at the end of the sixteenth century, the fact remains that, like Charles II, it took an unconscionable time in dying."² That it is in fact not dead within the territorial area occupied by Indonesia is a piquant anomaly given the ideological bias of Indonesian foreign policy. An examination of Portuguese Timor as a problem for Indonesian foreign policy within the context of the proclaimed policy goals provides some insights into the determinants of Indonesia's revolutionary approach to the world, particularly the relationship between ideology and interest, as well as illuminates the possible future of Portuguese imperialism in the archipelago.

Portuguese Timor

Timor is the easternmost of the string of islands arching eastwards from Java to the Banda Sea which are known collectively as the Lesser Sundas (Indonesian: *Nusa Tenggara*). The entire island is about 300 miles long with an average width of 60 miles. Portuguese Timor consists of the eastern half of the island (approximately 5,700 square miles), the coastal enclave of Occussi-Ambenu in western Timor, and the two islands of Atauro and Jaco, for a total area of 7,383 square miles (New Jersey—7,836 square miles). The capital and only urban center is Dili (Dilli, Dilly)

¹ Sukarno, *Political Manifesto*, Independence Day Address, Aug. 17, 1959.

² D. G. E. Hall, *A Short History of South-East Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 206.

located on the north coast. The entire province is often referred to as Timor-Dili.

The population of Portuguese Timor was recorded in the 1960 census as 517,079, distributed unevenly, with an average density of 23 per square kilometer. Dili has a population of about 7,000. Although the 1960 census did not indicate the racial composition of the population, such data was included in the 1950 census, and there is no reason to believe that the general proportions have greatly changed. The 1950 figures are given in Table I. It should be noted that Timor has the lowest percentage of European inhabitants of all of the Overseas Provinces of Portugal.

TABLE I
*Composition of Portuguese Timor's Population in 1950*³

European	568
<i>Mestico</i> (mixed blood)	2,022
Chinese	3,122
Other non-indigenous (Goan, etc.)	212
indigenous- <i>civilizado</i>	1,541
indigenous- <i>não-civilizado</i>	434,907
Total	442,378

The distinction between *civilizado* and *não-civilizado* in Portuguese "colonial" practice has been important. The term *civilizado* denotes those individuals who may be counted as being culturally modern as opposed to traditional. Theoretically, the goal of Portuguese policy is to assimilate the indigenous people to the Portuguese way of life. This is euphemistically called achieving desired levels of economic and social progress. Of the 1950 population only 7,471 (1.8%) of the total—i.e., all but the *não-civilizado* category in Table I—were classified as *civilizado*. Thus, less than 4/10ths of one percent of the indigenous population have been assimilated after more than three centuries of rule by Portugal. Of the total population more than 98% are considered to be outside of the limits of western civilization.

It was not until the first years of the 18th century that the Portuguese established a permanent administration on Timor.⁴ Portuguese interest in the island, however, dates back to the sixteenth century. Timor's sandalwood was an important trade item and the Portuguese sent annual collection missions to the island. The Dominican friars also had established themselves in the eastern Lesser Sundas by the middle of the sixteenth

³ These figures are given in United Nations Document A/AC.109/L.67, July 10, 1963, para. 51.

⁴ The material on Portuguese Timor is drawn principally from the following sources: *Timor-Background Paper Prepared by the Secretariat*, United Nations doc. A/AC.108/L.13, Dec. 3, 1962; William Burton Sowash, "Colonial Rivalries in Timor," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, VII:3 (May, 1948), pp. 227-235; C. R. Boxer, "Portuguese Timor—A Rough Island Story: 1515-1960," *History Today*, X:5 (May, 1960), pp. 349-355. Since the preparation of this manuscript was completed, an American Universities Field Staff report has described the Portuguese efforts to modernize Timor. See Willard A. Hanna, "Reanimated Timor," *AUFS, Southeast Asia Series*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 7, 8 and 9.

century. In 1662 the Dutch East India Company entered the area and began to displace the Portuguese. Competition between the Dutch and the Portuguese in Timor was regulated by a treaty of 1661 that gave the Dutch the western part of the island and the Portuguese the eastern. Constant internecine warfare marked the history of the island. The Dutch mounted a number of pacification campaigns, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, had firmly secured themselves in the west. The Portuguese, although pressed not only by the indigenous wars but by the Dutch as well, did not strongly garrison the island. Their position was tenuous, resting on the ability to play one indigenous group off against another.

During the Napoleonic Wars the British occupied Dutch Timor. The Dutch reoccupation after the war opened a new period in the history of the joint occupancy of the island. Although both countries recognized one another's rights, there was a constant irritant over undefined boundaries. The Dutch would have liked to purchase Portuguese Timor but Portugal was only willing to negotiate boundaries. The long history of boundary discussions centered on the question of the enclaves held by both powers within the other's territory. A mixed commission working in 1898–99 settled most of the outstanding issues, and a convention embodying the border agreement was signed at the Hague in 1904. However, a further difficulty arose concerning the eastern boundary of the Occussi-Ambenu enclave. This question was referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and in 1914 a decision was handed down. From that point on, the boundaries of Timor have not been called into question.

The joint interest of the two powers in Timor, to the exclusion of third parties, received treaty status in a convention signed in Lisbon in 1893 in which *inter alia* Portugal and the Netherlands promised preference to each other in the event of the disposal of their rights in Timor. In the 1904 Hague convention the signatories agreed not to cede their rights in Timor to any third party.

Portuguese Timor was first administered from Goa and later came under the jurisdiction of Macao. In 1896, Timor was separated from Macao and became a separate administrative unit. It was not until after the final military pacification campaign in 1913 that civil government was introduced. With pacification came the introduction of commercial agriculture, particularly coffee, making use of forced labor. The European population of Portuguese Timor has always been small. For a time the territory served as a penal colony. After 1930 an effort was made to attract Portuguese settlers to the island for plantation development, but without much success.

Although Portugal was neutral in World War II, Timor did not escape the ravages of the war in the Pacific. It was occupied in turn by allied, Japanese and again allied forces, and the modest economic progress in the colony was set back. The Portuguese were able to reassert their sovereignty after the war without difficulty.

By Portuguese law Timor is an integral part of the Portuguese Republic with the administrative status of an Overseas Province. Until 1951 Timor, as well as the other dependencies of Portugal, was a colony. In that year the constitutional framework of the Portuguese empire was changed to incorporate the extra-European territories into the state. Nevertheless, according to United Nations sources, "The relationship of . . . Timor to Portugal remains essentially a colonial one and the inhabitants of these territories have very limited participation in the central and local organs of government."⁵

As a partial response to the increasing volume of foreign criticism of Portugal's "colonial" policy, the Lisbon authorities have in recent years made an effort to create administrative structures in the overseas provinces more broadly based than in the past and to bring the indigenous inhabitants of overseas Portugal into closer contact with local government. This was the main thrust of the new Overseas Organic Law of 1963 and was given specific application in the new Statute of Timor.⁶ In discussing political evolution in the Overseas Provinces, it is necessary, however, to remember that the nature of the central government itself is the important determinant of the direction of change in the non-metropolitan parts of Portugal. Portugal is a corporative republic. The state is organized along highly centralized lines with interest representation being a function of the various corporative bodies.

The chief governmental officer of Portuguese Timor is the Governor, appointed from Lisbon by the Council of Ministers.⁷ In 1963, for the first time, a Legislative Council was established. The old appointive Government Council was retained as an executive advisory body. The new Legislative Council has powers greater than the former Government Council had and shares some of the authority of the Governor. Membership on the Council is obtained by election following the Portuguese corporative pattern.

Representation is indirect, therefore. After World War II all inhabitants of Timor were granted citizenship. This did not carry with it the right to a ballot. Suffrage was effectively restricted to the *civilizados*. As part of its attempt to give at least the semblance of greater participation in the political process to all inhabitants of the Overseas Provinces, the Portuguese government in 1963 promulgated a new electoral law that theoretically brought the *não-civilizados* into the electoral machinery. However, the qualifications set by the new law, particularly with respect to property and

⁵ United Nations doc. A/5160, Aug. 15, 1962, para. 46.

⁶ *Estatuto Político-Administrativo da provincia de Timor* (Agencia-Geral do Ultramar, Lisboa, 1963). See also United Nations doc. A/AC.109/L.126, June 9, 1964.

⁷ The governmental structure of Portuguese Timor parallels that of the other smaller Overseas Provinces: Cape Verde Islands, Macao, Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe. Angola and Mozambique have a somewhat different institutional framework.

tax requirements, are such that the indigenous people are still effectively debarred. One United Nations appraisal states:

Even though the Native Statute has been repealed, the right to vote and to participate in the Legislative Councils and in the administration of the territories still appears to be related to the attainment of a degree of 'social progress' which in effect means the assimilation of Portuguese culture and the attainment of a Portuguese way of life.⁸

Despite the new governmental look on Timor as a result of the dictated adjustments of the Overseas Organic Law of 1963 and the subsequent new Statute for Timor, in terms of control from Lisbon and lack of effective indigenous representation, little has been changed. The United Nations Special Committee concerned with Portuguese overseas territories has appraised the 1963 reforms in these words, "[It] does not make any substantial changes in the powers of the organs of Portugal's government to legislate for territories which have been described previously."⁹ Unfortunately there does not seem to be any way to ascertain Timorese reaction to Portugal's rule, at least within Timor. In the various reports and papers from United Nations sources that treat Timor, one usually meets the rather resigned statement, "No information concerning political movements in the territory is available."¹⁰

The principal economic activity of the Portuguese Timorese is subsistence agriculture, chiefly shifting cultivation of maize with some wet rice culture. Timor is resource poor, and hopes for development have been ill-founded. The General Assembly of the United Nations has been told that, "In the post-war period there has been no significant progress in the economic development of Timor."¹¹ This statement was made in the middle of Timor's second five-year development plan (1959-64). The development plans, modestly financed (second plan—six million dollars) have concentrated on the reconstruction of the port of Dili, resource development, and transportation. Public services in Timor are poorly developed, with the generation of electricity, transportation facilities, and communications being absent or inadequate outside of Dili.

Despite a tariff-free market, only a small part of Timors' trade is with Portugal. The principal exports are coffee, which provides about two-thirds of the value of all exports, copra, and rubber. The largest markets are in Northern Europe. Although the volume of exports has been steadily rising, the province shows a persistent and sizeable deficit in its trade balance.¹²

⁸ United Nations doc. A/AC.109/L.126, June 9, 1964, para. 73

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 21.

¹⁰ For example, United Nations doc. A/AC.109/67, July 10, 1963, para. 58; doc. A/AC.108/L.13, Dec. 3, 1962, para. 35.

¹¹ United Nations doc. A/5160, Aug. 15, 1962, para. 242.

¹² Table 9 in United Nations doc. A/AC.108/L.13, Dec. 3, 1962, gives the trade figures for the decade 1950-1960.

The amelioration of this deficit would require not only increased investment in the export sector of the economy but the development of local enterprises for import substitution.

A word should be said at this point about another aspect of Timor's trade, and that is the illegal movement of goods across the border with Indonesia. Smuggling has been a recurrent theme in the Indonesian-Portuguese relationship. Of course, part of what the authorities might consider illicit trade is a natural and free exchange by the indigenous people of Timor to whom artificial international boundaries have little significance. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that some businessmen on the Indonesian side of the border have shown a preference for exchange gaining them escudos rather than rupiah.¹³

The fact that economic and social progress in Timor has been so retarded can be attributed to a number of causes. Not the least is its physical isolation. Infrequent flights from Darwin and perhaps a dozen ships a year make it a fairly remote outpost of empire. A second factor has been the absence of a large European settler community. Thirdly, government revenue is limited, affording an ordinary budget of less than three million dollars a year. A final element has been the delayed recognition by the Portuguese government that only with programs aimed at opening up the modern world to the traditional population of Timor will a climate for development be created. As the present Governor of the Province has stated, "It is no use in having technical advances and big material improvements that the people cannot understand and take advantage of."¹⁴

The key to a better life for the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor, if they remain Portuguese, is education, and thereby, assimilation. In 1950 the adult illiteracy rate on Timor was placed between 95-99%. What education there was in the non-urban areas was in the hands of the Catholic missions. Government schools were primarily for the *civilizados*. As late as 1960, it was estimated that primary school enrollment in the Province was only about 6% of the total school age population. In February, 1964, changes were introduced in the education system to make primary schooling compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 12. But, still less than half of the primary school age population is in fact in school. Part of the problem is the lack of teachers and schools. There is also a question of the relevancy of curricula and textbooks prepared primarily for the use of Portuguese children in Portugal. It remains to be seen whether Portugal will have the opportunity to prove that its new resolution in Timor will produce a new society.¹⁵

¹³ See "Remnants of Empire, II. Portuguese Timor," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XXX:11 (Dec. 15, 1960), p. 585.

¹⁴ Col. Jose Alberty Correia, as reported by Tillman Durdin in the *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 1965.

¹⁵ Durdin, *ibid.*

Portuguese Timor in Indonesian Foreign Policy

The continued presence of a colonial regime on Timor, notwithstanding Portuguese constitutional fictions, coexisting with Sukarno's Indonesian and NEFO resolutions at first glance could appear to mark Indonesian inconsistency of purpose. When viewed against the background of active policies against Dutch imperialism in West New Guinea and what, by Indonesian definition, was continued British imperialism in Malaysia, the restraint that Indonesia has exercised toward Portuguese imperialism in Timor seems to be uncharacteristic. Although all of the ingredients of a course of action directed towards the expulsion of the Portuguese seem to be present, there has not been formulated an official Indonesian policy specifically directed to the elimination of Portuguese rule on Timor.

This does not imply an absence of Indonesian interest or lack of consciousness that a problem for Indonesian foreign policy might exist. Even before India had extinguished Goa's colonial existence, a move that highlighted the egregious presence of the Portuguese in Timor, the Vice Chairman of Sukarno's Supreme Advisory Council called on the people of Indonesia to "fill your hearts with hatred not only for Portuguese colonialism, but for all colonialism still existing on Asian and African soil," threateningly adding that Indonesia's "eyes and heart are directed toward Portuguese Timor and Goa," which, "are still under the power of colonialism."¹⁶ Indonesians have not been indifferent to the supposed plight of the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor who, by definition, are "suffering" under alien domination. General Nasution has characterized the situation in Portuguese Timor as one of "enslavement."¹⁷ Former Foreign Minister Subandrio attempted to use Timor as a hostage in the struggle against Portuguese rule in Africa. Discussing Angola in the Indonesian People's Representative Congress, he warned the Lisbon authorities not to ignore the attitudes and temper of the Indonesian people because, "Indonesia lies so close to one of Portugal's colonies—Portuguese Timor," adding the implied threat, "Do not wait until the Indonesian people's anger flares up."¹⁸ But the Indonesian government has not stoked this particular revolutionary fire, and the verbal condemnations of Lisbon's policy and hortatory injunctions against Portuguese colonialism have not given way to substantive acts to eradicate vestigial Portuguese imperium in Southern Asia. On the whole, Indonesian relations with Portugal, at least in so far as Timor is concerned, have been correct, if not good. Since the Spring of 1965, however, the relations between the two countries have been a state of sus-

¹⁶ Ruslan Abdulgani, speech at protest rally on Angola, sponsored by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Jakarta, July 12, 1961.

¹⁷ As reported by *Antara*, Dec. 22, 1962.

¹⁸ Subandrio, statement to plenary session of the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, July 3, 1961.

pending animation. A Portuguese spokesman has described relations between the adjoining territories on Timor as "cordial."¹⁹

Incidents and disputes have occurred along the borders of Timor which could have been construed by Jakarta as provocation and a pretext for a more aggressive policy if it had so desired. In mid-1962, for instance, the Portuguese government announced that two Indonesians and one Portuguese had been killed in what were described as purely domestic border incidents. The official Indonesian news agency, *Antara*, on the other hand, charged the Portuguese authorities with "provoking trouble by creating tensions among the local people," kidnapping Indonesian citizens, incursions into Indonesian territory to steal cattle and goods, and smuggling. More serious accusations by Indonesia of Portuguese batteries firing on coastwise shipping were vigorously denied by Portugal and were not pursued by Indonesia. It is doubtful that much more should be read into the sporadic outbursts along the borders and the accompanying tensions than the frictions inherent in the nature of such a joint occupancy, complicated by the lack of ethnic definition along the frontier.

Indonesian government officials in repeated public statements have recognized that Indonesian sovereignty does not encompass Portuguese Timor. Any claim to the territory has been categorically abjured. "We have no claims on Portuguese Timor, nor on North Borneo or on any other territory outside of the former Dutch East Indies."²⁰ On the occasion of a visit to Portugal in 1961, Sukarno reportedly assured Dr. Salazar that Portuguese rights on Timor would be respected. A United Nations "background paper" on Timor sums the matter up as follows:

For its part the government of Indonesia has declared that it maintains friendly relations with Portugal and has no claim to Portuguese Timor, which has never been part of the Dutch East Indies and therefore is not of the same status as West Irian [West New Guinea].²¹

But the absence of a historically or legally viable territorial claim to Portuguese Timor does not rule out the development of a political claim based on criteria related not to the colonial past, but to the present and future.

Although the spokesmen of the Indonesian government officially deny territorial ambitions with respect to Timor, there is abundant evidence to indicate that such ambitions do exist. Indonesian expansive nationalism, which some might define as imperialism, has been noted by a number of students of Indonesian foreign policy. There is no need to prove that modern Indonesia is seeking to recreate the 14th century Majapahit empire to demonstrate a constant thread of expansionism in the ideology, if not the actions of the Jakarta government. One writer who has followed closely Indonesia's relations with its neighbors sums it up as follows: "In Djakarta,

¹⁹ As reported by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Jan. 19, 1963.

²⁰ Subandrio, as reported by *Antara*, Oct. 2, 1962.

²¹ United Nations doc. A/AC.108/L.13, Dec. 3, 1962, para. 35.

however, expansionist goals—known as ‘Greater Indonesia’—do seem to be very near the surface of today’s policies.”²² Portuguese Timor is a natural area of expansionist’s interest. The author has spoken with Indonesians of various political persuasions to whom the acquisition of Portuguese Timor is seen as part of a territorial rounding out process. Indonesian attitudes toward Timor are not framed in terms of conquest, but rather the “recovery” of *Indonesia irredenta*.

Any unofficial “liberation” policy which Jakarta may have had towards Portuguese Timor was one of irresolute indirection. For instance, the Indonesian authorities would look favorably on the emergence of political movements ostensibly originating in the Portuguese province aimed at overthrowing the colonial rule. With specific reference to North Borneo and Portuguese Timor, General Nasution has said: “We support their struggles, but do not claim their territories.”²³ If the goal of the “freedom fighters” should be incorporation into the Indonesian state, Indonesia would not be unsympathetic. Ruslan Abdulgani, speaking as Minister of Information, has been uncontradicted in his statement that, “Although we are not an expansionist nation we cannot allow people of common ancestry to be persecuted and thrown in prison merely because they want to unite with the fatherland of their ancestors.”²⁴ Other Indonesians have been more specific: “If the people of Timor today or tomorrow started a revolution, . . . we would support them. . . . After independence, if they wanted to stay independent, fine. . . . If they want to join Indonesia, we will talk it over.”²⁵

Actual efforts to create the conditions of an anti-colonial struggle on Timor have been tentative and apparently have aroused little enthusiasm. In early 1961, an organization called the Bureau of Liberation of the Timor Republic, located in Jakarta, called on the people of Timor to drive out the Portuguese colonialists. A United Nations report on Timor in 1962 noted the existence of this Bureau (Committee), but stated that there was no information concerning political activity in Portuguese Timor. It was claimed in Spring, 1963, that “independence fighters” had set up a United Republic of Timor Dilly with a government of 12 ministers who had been secretly installed inside of Portuguese Timor in April. The release containing this information was signed by a person who styled himself the “Director General of the Presidium of the United Republic of Timor Dilly” and was made public in Jakarta. The report said that the “United Republic of Timor Dilly” was functioning as a nation and appealed for recognition by other governments. The requested recognitions were not forthcoming, nor has the “government” of the “republic” availed itself of

²² Bernard K. Gordon, *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia* (Prentice-Hall/Spectrum, 1966), p. 80.

²³ General Nasution, speech at rally at Purwokerto, Jan. 22, 1963.

²⁴ As reported by Radio Republic of Indonesia, Sept. 3, 1963.

²⁵ General Mokoginta in interview with Warren Unna, *Washington Post*, May 10, 1963, quoted by Bernard K. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

the platform offered by the United Nations Special Committee concerned with Portuguese dependent territories. Indonesia, other than offering facilities in Jakarta to the publicists of the Timor "liberation movement," does not appear to have given it much support. If the United Republic of Timor Dilly is in fact an autonomous political body, its representatives in Jakarta have been well concealed, not taking part in the anti-imperialist rallies and programs that were once a feature of life in the Indonesian capital.

That there may have been internal disturbances in Portuguese Timor during the year 1963 can be inferred from sources other than Jakarta. There was a troop build-up in Portuguese Timor beginning in the second-half of 1962. A troop ship was sent to Timor with 1,000 soldiers termed replacements, but this force was reported to outnumber the entire Portuguese garrison on the island. In January 1963, Portuguese officials said that defense forces consisted of a few troops only. It was not clarified whether this statement comprehended internal security forces as well as border forces. In May 1963, a member of the Portuguese Army staff, Col. Jose Alberty Correia, was appointed Governor of the province. In mid-1963, it was reported, but then denied, that elements of the Portuguese garrison in Macao were being moved to Timor. The defense budget for Timor was enlarged in 1963, reaching 29 million escudos, a figure equalling half the province's ordinary revenues for 1963. If there were the beginnings of insurrection it has been contained. No real armed threat to Portuguese authority in Timor has materialized. The Lisbon authorities apparently feel secure enough in Timor, both in their domestic control and their relations with Indonesia, to justify continued expenditures in the development program, including a new emphasis on tourism.

All of the factors appear to be present that would be conducive to an active Indonesian "liberation" policy. There is ample justification for the wresting of Timor from Portugal in the framework of Indonesia's revolutionary ideology. Timor is even a more obvious case of imperialism than Malaysia. The normative limits on Indonesian state action are few. Insofar as international legal obligations are concerned, the Indonesian view was succinctly stated by Sukarno: "Colonial rule over another nation, although perhaps formerly agreed in a certain international treaty, . . . must be got rid of as quickly as possible."²⁶ The precedent of Goa and external assistance to rebel groups in Africa indicate that any Indonesian Timorese adventure could be justified as defense against the "permanent aggression" of colonialism. In the atmosphere of hostility towards Portugal in the African-Asian world, the destruction of another bastion of the imperialists would receive general approbation. Furthermore, if this should result in the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia, this would receive support as well. Revealing in this connection is a statement by the U.S.S.R.

²⁶ Sukarno, *Political Manifesto*, Independence Day Address, Aug. 17, 1959.

that for its part it regarded Portuguese Timor as Indonesian national territory.²⁷

Not only would the general ideological and moral climate in the anti-imperialist sphere be favorable, but the relative power positions of Portugal and Indonesia would not be inhibiting to Indonesia. Militarily, the liberation of Timor, weakly garrisoned in relation to disposable Indonesian forces, and so remote from Portugal as well as the Portuguese forces tied down in Africa, would not constitute a problem for Indonesia. Nor, as experience has shown, could Portugal expect direct assistance from her allies.

Considering all of the above, we must conclude that despite aspirations—ideological and imperial—Indonesia has refrained from actively seeking to force out the Portuguese on the basis of an Indonesian determination of interest. That the liberation of Portuguese Timor does not have a high priority in the ranging of Indonesian-Portuguese relations. There had been other, more immediate tasks set for the policy: first, the “restoration” of West Irian to the fold of the Republic, and then the attempt to foil the “neocolonialist plot” of Malaysia. A premature move against Portuguese Timor could have been injurious to Indonesian interest in terms of the accomplishment of these two more important tasks.

In the West Irian dispute, the Indonesian case was based on the claim that West Irian was an integral part of the former Netherlands East Indies and therefore continued Dutch possession was a deprivation of Indonesian territorial rights. West Irian was a part of Indonesia’s colonial inheritance. Indonesia went to great pains during its diplomatic campaign against the Dutch to stress the finiteness of its territorial ambitions. In the confrontation with Malaysia, Indonesia emphasized that territorial aggrandizement was not a goal; that it had no claim to Sarawak or North Borneo. “These are not part of our territory,” Dr. Subandrio proclaimed, “nor is there any reason upon which such a claim might be based.”²⁸ An aggressive policy towards Portuguese Timor might have destroyed the credibility of Indonesia’s self-denying position on territorial expansion. It would also have increased the apprehensions of Indonesia’s neighbors as to the ultimate goals of Indonesia in Southeast Asia.

One of the uneasy neighbors is Australia. It has watched the development of Indonesian foreign policy with serious concern. The Australians came to the military assistance of Malaysia in the confrontation with Indonesia, despite Indonesian threats. One of the calculations which Indonesia would have to make in weighing decisions about Portuguese Timor would be Australian reaction. An aggressive policy towards Portuguese Timor,

²⁷ United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, Fourth Committee, 1047th meeting, Nov. 11, 1960.

²⁸ Subandrio, *Indonesia’s Foreign Policy*, reprint of article appearing in special issue of *Le Monde*, May, 1964.

whether for territory or in the service of anti-imperialism, would alert Australia to a real or supposed danger to Australia's role in the eastern half of New Guinea. It would immediately place in doubt the value of Indonesian guarantees of the inviolability of the New Guinea border. Doubts are already there, but at this stage of Indonesian national development, and in the flux of creating a new international political order in Southeast Asia, even a suspicious Australia fits better into the pattern of Indonesian state interactions than an actively hostile Australia. We suggest, therefore, that although given the non-interest determinants of Indonesian foreign policy, the liberation of Portuguese Timor was not attempted because it would not have furthered Indonesia's interests; in fact, it might have been injurious to interest in those areas of Indonesia's foreign relations that were assigned greater value. Interest, however, is not immutable.

The Future of Portuguese Timor

In a ringing declaration, the General Assembly of the United Nations has said: "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."²⁹ Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have determined that Portuguese policy in its Overseas Provinces is violative of that right. Portugal has been condemned and sanctions have been called for, but Portugal has not been responsive to the African-Asian mood. In Timor the Portuguese claim that self-determination by the Timorese becomes meaningless if there are outside (Indonesian) pressures. They can point to Indonesian attitudes about self-determination in West Irian for justification of this. Secondly, to talk of independence has no relevance in a discussion of Timor's future. It is difficult to imagine that the territory could live as an independent political unit in the Indonesian archipelago. Politics, geography, economics, and ethnic affinities militate against such a development. The Portuguese realize this. Salazar told the Portuguese National Assembly that given Timor's position in the midst of Indonesia, it would not live an independent life.³⁰ Nor can the Portuguese be expected to voluntarily transfer sovereignty of Portuguese Timor to Indonesia. Such a transfer would be, in their eyes, unjust, not only to Portugal but to the peoples of Timor.

The persistence of a Portuguese role on Timor on the surface is a function of nationalism, prestige, and a (newly emergent) sense of mission. In fact, the real heart of Portuguese resistance to any change in the *status quo* in Timor is its relation to the Salazar government's complete commitment to the maintenance of the Portuguese state intact. The erosion of the Portuguese position at any one point would weaken the entire structure of

²⁹ General Assembly, Resolution 1514 (XV), Dec. 14, 1960.

³⁰ These questions were raised by Dr. Salazar in his speech to the Portuguese National Assembly on June 30, 1961, as quoted in United Nations doc. A/AC.108/L.13, Dec. 3, 1962, para. 36.

the overseas policy and give ammunition to the growing number of dissidents in Metropolitan Portugal who are not identified with the empire.

It is doubtful, however, that Portugal would be able to resist Indonesian pressures if they were transformed into an Indonesian policy actively working for the ending of Portuguese rule on Timor. Timor is not Angola or Mozambique. There is no great economic value to Portuguese Timor. There is no large European settler community to complicate a transfer of sovereignty. Timor is not defensible by Portugal. An Indonesian advance would probably encounter the same kind of resistance that the Indian army met in Goa.

What are the possibilities for the development of an Indonesian forward policy? There is no demand for immediate action against Portuguese Timor. From the vantage points of geography, politics, power, and population, Indonesia is not in a comparative situation. It does not have to pre-empt a position in Timor. The only pressures for less restraint emanated from ideology. This was disciplined, bowing to current interests that put the question of Timor into the future. On the other hand, paradoxical as it may seem, the changed direction of Indonesian foreign policy towards Malaysia, and the emergence of a new government that must justify its authority, heighten the possibilities of an Indonesian move against Timor. The domestic Indonesian political requirements that produced confrontation with Malaysia have not really altered. The new leadership may find Timor a useful *divertissement* at some critical moment in the future. This is admittedly speculative. Less speculative is the assumption that when Indonesian ideology and interest converge in a Timor "liberation" policy, the Portuguese will be faced with the realities of power in the Archipelago. In conclusion, we can say that in a sense Portuguese Timor is a trust territory, the Portuguese holding it in trust for Indonesia.