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AETFA has just recently emailed a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor Leste. The following article was written a year ago but nothing has changed in regards to the Australian Government's willingness to keep the truth from both the East Timorese and the Australian people.

What Australia doesn't want East Timor to know

by Pat Walsh

April 04, 2012 www.eurekastreet.com.au

On 20 March, Attorney-General Nicola Roxon agreed to a Department of Foreign Affairs request to block public access to 34-year-old cables on the famine that ravaged East Timor early in the Indonesian occupation. Roxon reportedly believes that release of the material would prejudice Australia's international relations.

Given that Suharto and his regime have gone and that many other sensitive cables on the Timor question have been released over the last 12 years without damaging Australia's external relations, the decision is puzzling.

As someone who has spent many years working with both East Timorese and Indonesians to understand their shared history, I would argue that rather than cause for concern, the release of the cables would be generally welcomed in both countries as part of the free flow of ideas and information that both now enjoy.

Australia, as one of few witnesses to these events, should contribute what it knows so that these dark times are better understood and learned from in East Timor, Indonesia, Australia and elsewhere.

The famine of 1977–79 cut a swathe through East Timor's civilian population like the third horseman of the Apocalypse. Having failed to subdue the Timorese, the Indonesian military opted to starve them out. In addition to destroying food sources, forcing the population to flee and abandon gardens, the military also blocked international agencies from delivering aid until the army had achieved its military objectives.

When the US Catholic Relief Services was permitted to survey the situation in May 1979, its representative found conditions as critical as anything he had encountered during his 14 years experience in Asia. The famine, he reported, was not only claiming the very young and very old; many in their prime were also dying.

Most of the over 100,000 civilian deaths in East Timor during the 24 year war occurred at this time. The significance of the famine to the Timorese was brought home in the course of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation's (CAVR) inquiry conducted after independence. Witnesses explained that Timor was no stranger to malnutrition, seasonal hunger or other tragedies, but this was the mother of all catastrophes. Whole families and communities were wiped out by starvation.

'In August 1977 in Idada we buried 80 bodies in one day,' Manuel Carceres da Costa told CAVR. 'They died of starvation. They died with swollen and aching stomachs, unable to walk.'

Maria Jose da Costa's account was reminiscent of a 1950s rabbit drive in Australia: the military sprayed the long grass with gasoline and set fire to it to drive people out. Unable to run due to hunger, the elderly were left behind and died where they sat, defiant and dignified, dressed, she said, as if they were going to Sunday mass.

The famine dwarfs the Santa Cruz massacre and similar atrocities in scale and significance but is far less well known or analysed. This information gap is principally due to restrictions on access to East Timor applied by the Indonesian military until 1989. As a result most Indonesians are not only ignorant of what happened but continue to believe the Suharto regime's claims that the military was doing good work in East Timor.

Knowledge of what really happened is therefore an important corrective. It will help Indonesians understand why East Timor chose to separate from Indonesia in 1999 and why civilian control of the military is critical.

The period is also a blind spot internationally. Journalists continue to attribute the death-toll in East Timor to shooting and bombing rather than starvation, and researchers are unaware of the famine.

EDITOR: Bob Hanney (bohan@bluebottle.com). Assisted by AETFA committee members and friends.

Except where explicitly stated, news, commentary and discussion are provided for educational and informational purposes and do not represent the official position of the AETFA Committee.

Cormac Ó Gráda, an Irish expert on famine, makes no mention of East Timor in his 2009 study *Famine, A Short History*, though he provides analysis and lessons from totalitarian famines of the 20th century in Stalin's USSR and Mao Tse-tung's China. Likewise Thomas Kenneally's book *Three Famines: Starvation and Politics* does not include the famine that occurred on Australia's doorstep though it illustrates his thesis.

East Timorese want to know more about the events that forced them to abandon families and have left them troubled because remains cannot be found for reburial according to custom. They also want to know why a crime of this magnitude has not been accounted for. Australia can help them because it was a witness and what it saw is presumably contained in official cables from the time... Australia's ambassador to Indonesia was one of 11 diplomats to visit the territory in September 1978. Shocked at what he saw, he joined colleagues from Canada, Japan and the US to call for urgent relief. Assistance did not arrive until 12 months later, too late for many thousands of innocent people.

It will be hard to look an affected Timorese family in the eye today and explain why, over 30 years later, Australia does not want them to know what it knows about this catastrophe.



Pat Walsh has returned to Australia after working for ten years in East Timor, mostly as part of the [Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation](#). The UN recruited him to help establish the Commission and he served variously as its executive director and special adviser. Following the Commission's dissolution in 2005 he served as senior adviser to the Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat.

PETITION ON 'COMFORT WOMEN'

On February 22, the Japan East Timor Coalition handed over its petition on the so-called "comfort women" issue in Timor-Leste to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in Tokyo. The petition is supported by 44 Japanese organizations, 367 individuals in Japan, 14 overseas organizations and 25 individuals abroad. The total number of supporters was 450, slightly higher than that of last year.

Petition for urgent action to realize justice for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery in Timor-Leste during WWII

February 20, 2013

His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Foreign Minister of Japan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Dear Sir,

With the completion of the United Nations mission of assistance at the end of 2012, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste moved into a new phase as a fully self-sufficient state. Relations between Timor-Leste and Japan, which has assisted nation-building in Timor-Leste for many years as a member of the international community, have also entered a new stage, with the provision in March last year of the first yen loan to Timor-Leste.

However, Japan has yet to fulfill its responsibility towards Timor-Leste with regards to a matter of most serious concern. This is clarifying the truth of the grave human rights violations that were committed by the Japanese military during its WWII occupation of Portuguese Timor, ensuring accountability for these violations, and providing redress for victims. In particular, victims of Japanese military sexual slavery have endured for many years without any official measures being taken. Already, of the 19 victims who have come forth publicly, nine have passed away without hearing a single word of apology from the Japanese government.

Two of these victims passed away last year. One, Mariana de Araujo da Costa Marques (from Ainaro District), had testified about being handed over to a "comfort station" in Same after an unsuccessful attempt to hide in the bush. The other, Marcelina da Costa (Manufani District), had testified that she was threatened with a gun and handed over to a Japanese soldier called "Michi."

Timor-Leste celebrated the 10th anniversary of independence last year, and at events such as the seminar "10 Years Since Independence: Looking Back at Women's Rights," the General Meeting of the National Youth Council, and the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Dom Boaventura's uprising against the Portuguese colonial government, a panel display dealing with the issue of the "comfort women" was shown. Further, a series of five radio programs created by local human rights groups on the "comfort women" issue was

broadcast twice by Radio Televisao Timor-Leste (RTTL), Timor-Leste's public radio and television station. Thanks to the efforts of such local organizations, people in Timor-Leste are steadily learning more and more about the question of the "comfort women."

Further, when Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Japan's human rights record was conducted at the UN Human Rights Council last year, seven states referred to violations during WWII, including the "comfort women" issue, and the government of Timor-Leste called on the Japanese government to cooperate in "direct, genuine communication with survivors of past atrocities."

The Japanese government must respond to these appeals from victimized countries. However, the new Abe government that was elected at the end of last year is going backwards with regard to this issue, indicating that it wishes to rethink the Kono Statement of 1993.

Today, February 20, 2013, is the 71st anniversary of the invasion of the island of Timor by the Japanese military. Since the end of the war, the Japanese government has taken no measures to address its responsibility for damage caused by the Japanese military in Portuguese Timor, and compensation to Timor-Leste for war damage remains an unresolved issue. Since establishing diplomatic relations with Timor-Leste, the Japanese government has attempted to justify its lack of action under the slogan of "looking to the future," a stance that we believe is unconscionable.

Since 2000, we have worked with local women's groups, human rights groups and legal practitioners to gather testimony from victims and witnesses of Japanese military sexual slavery in Timor-Leste, obtain documents from archives of related countries, compile the results of these investigations, and educate people in both Timor-Leste and Japan about what actually happened. We have also communicated the wishes of victims to the governments of both countries. The courage displayed by victims is a light that will guide the building of the rule of law, democracy and equality between the sexes in the new nation of Timor-Leste. These values are ones that Japan promotes internationally, and if the Japanese government itself does not display these values itself in its own conduct, it will be impossible for it to obtain the trust of Timor-Leste or the international community in

general.

We therefore call on the Japanese government to take the following steps in order to build true friendship between Japan and Timor-Leste:

1. Hold talks with the government of Timor-Leste on the issue of the "comfort women" by the end of this year.
2. Admit the facts, apologize to victims, and consult with victims and victim support groups on appropriate redress for victims.

Yours sincerely

Japan-East Timor Coalition

In mid-February AETFA-SA added its name to an IPAN (Independent and Peaceful Australia Network) statement (below), which was produced in *The Australian* as an advert. We did this as we considered that any hostility between the U.S. and China would be negative to not only Australia's interests but also Timor-Leste's. Lack of an independent foreign policy by Australia has always impacted badly on our neighbours.

The statement was signed by many eminent Australians and a plethora of organisations. See full listing at www.ipan.org.au

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Calling for an Independent and Peaceful Australia

Ten years ago in February 2003, unprecedented numbers of people joined the largest demonstrations in recorded history to oppose the invasion of Iraq. They were right; there were no weapons of mass destruction and war was not the answer.

Learning from recent history, we, the undersigned call for an independent and peaceful Australia. We are concerned about developments that appear to jeopardise Australia's friendship and cooperation with nations in our region. In particular, we are concerned about the basing of foreign troops on Australian sovereign territory.

We are opposed to the stationing of US marines in Darwin; the presence of the Pine Gap surveillance facility; the use of West Australian naval facilities by US warships and the possibility of US military aircraft and warships being stationed at Stirling in WA or the Cocos Islands.

Rather than being of benefit, we hold that the presence of US forces on Australian soil to be a handicap to Australia's international relationships. We see domestic costs to us in financial, social and environmental terms.

Through recent decades we have witnessed a steady increase in the level of Australia's military involvement with the US. We believe the integration of the two countries' defence forces and foreign policies has reached a point where our independence is at risk.

We are witnessing expanding US military presence in the Asia Pacific region, with the apparent aim of 'containing' China. We fear a consequent rise in regional tensions and an expensive arms race.

We are convinced that these developments are not in Australia's best interests. They have the potential to sour existing good relations with our neighbours and even to embroil us in further warfare on behalf of a foreign power.

We want to live in an Australia with an independent foreign policy, under which our country is free to choose what is truly in our best interests.

Kirsty Sword Gusmão Cancer Treatment

(from Mary MacKillop East Timor Mission)

Some of you may already be aware that Kirsty was diagnosed with breast cancer just before Christmas 2012. Kirsty was in Melbourne for a family holiday when she received the news. She underwent surgery at the Peter McCallum Cancer Institute in Melbourne, Australia in January.

Kirsty's surgery went well and it was reported that the tumour was removed. She has remained positive both because of the early diagnosis and her confidence in the care and specialist treatment she is receiving at the Peter McCallum Cancer Institute. The Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão was here through her surgery and with news of a positive outcome returned to Dili. Kirsty and their three sons remain in Australia to enable Kirsty to undergo further treatment.

As you would imagine Kirsty is loved and supported by many for her extraordinary work for the people of Timor-Leste. She sent out a message saying "Thank you, dear friends, for all the prayers and messages of concern and love. I am doing fine, in the pink and thinking positive thanks to the amazing surgeons and staff of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, the care of so many and the presence of the men in my life."

Kirsty has now begun a course of chemotherapy which will be followed by a course of radiotherapy. Again her strength and positive thoughts show through as she said "I figure that the temporary loss of some bodily hairs and

sense of well-being are a small price to pay really for a reduction by a few percentage points of the risk of the cancer returning ... particularly when I need to be around to offer support to my three boys through the tough times they may encounter in their adult years, just as my own darling Mum is doing with me now. And then, of course, there's the matter of a certain infant nation that could also do with all hands on deck in the years to come..."

Kirsty says she is feeling strong and optimistic and has the love and support of vast numbers of friends and family members.

TWO FILMS:

1. *Alias Ruby Blade: a Story of Love and Revolution*

Alias Ruby Blade: A Story of Love and Revolution tells the remarkable love story of human rights activist Kirsty Sword and political prisoner Xanana Gusmão. Once an aspiring documentary filmmaker, Kirsty instead became a revolutionary, working in Jakarta for the Timorese resistance. Using the pseudonym "Ruby Blade," she smuggled video equipment, computers, and audio cassettes to their leader Gusmão, who was serving a life sentence in the notorious Cipinang Prison. As they exchanged letters, video messages, paintings, photographs and even bonsai trees, they fell in love without ever having met. Through archival footage, accounts from friends, and interviews with Sword herself, the film not only explores their remarkable relationship, but also the history of a decade of resistance that ultimately led to the UN-organized referendum on East Timor in 1999 and the country's independence.

Official Selection Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival 2012

***Ruby Blade's Australian tour is not coming to SA, however AETFA is hoping to hire the film for a showing in Adelaide later in the year.**

Aloia SA & Timorese SA Students Group
present the
South Australian Premiere of

2. *Bloodshot: The Dreams & Nightmares of East Timor*

5.00pm Saturday 18 May 2013

@ Allan Scott Auditorium, Hawke Building

55 North Terrace (Corner Fenn Place & North Terrace)

*Includes traditional music performance by the
Timorese South Australia Students Group***Tickets \$15.00* each** *plus 30c booking fee**To purchase tickets or donate go to
www.trybooking.com/CSYI***Proceeds benefit Alola SA & the Timorese SA
Students Group***Review from Cinephilia, Australia
October 2012-11-07***Synopsis: Peter A Gordon returns to East Timor to revisit
the people and places of his 1991 documentary on the
then occupied country and find out what has changed for
them since independence.*

Although **Bloodshot: The Dreams And Nightmares Of East Timor** serves as brief history of the country from its invasion by the Indonesians in 1975 to its state today as a independent developing nation, its real strength is the people whose story it tells.

The film has three main strands. First is the director's epiphanic experience in 1990 on hearing Shirley Shackleton recount the story of her husband, Greg, who was killed with his crew by the Indonesian Army as they invaded East Timor in 1975. This led a year later to Gordon with a young Australian woman in her early twenties, Kirsty Sword and a cameraman, Max Stahl, to go East Timor to report clandestinely on what was happening. Gordon and Sword left when things started to look too dangerous, with Sword moving to Djakarta where she worked undercover for the Timorese Clandestine Front and Stahl staying behind to shoot more footage.

The next strand of the narrative developed when Stahl filmed over 200 East Timorese being gunned down by the Indonesians. He smuggled the film out of the country and it became pivotal in opening the eyes of the world to the plight of its people

The third strand brings us up to the present day when Gordon returns to East Timor to reconvene with Stahl and Sword and find out how things have changed since the country gained independence. Sword is now married to the former Timorese guerrilla leader and Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmao, and continues her social justice work, whilst Stahl also lives in East Timor with a new wife and two young children.

Many people hearing director Peter A Gordon narrate this story might be reminded of Werner Herzog's approach to his subject matter. Although clearly moved by his subject matter, Gordon takes a philosophical, reflective approach to it. How else can we deal with such injustice and suffering and the fact that life goes on despite it?

With interviews with Sword and Stahl as well as Xanana Gusmao and José Ramos Horta and some of the East

Timorese who survived Indonesian atrocities, **Bloodshot: The Dreams And Nightmares Of East Timor** is a moving account of courage, commitment and the upwards movement of the human spirit.

**Quo Vadis the Peace Dialogue for
Papua?**by **Budi Hernawan**, Canberra

March 10, 2013

The Jakarta Post

Over a year ago, in February 2012, we were moved by the willingness of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to engage in dialogue with Papuans.

He expressed his commitment publicly during his audience with Papuan church leaders. After 12 months, however, we have not seen much progress in honoring his promise.

While we wait for any sign of follow-up, we have been struck by the shooting incidents in the Mulia area. Eight soldiers and four civilians were shot dead and some others are in a critical condition.

These incidents not only exemplify the unresolved 50-year conflict, but more importantly pose a serious threat to Papuan peace initiatives promoted by Papuan and Indonesian civil society. The incidents might also have reinforced the skeptics' belief that peace dialogue with Papua is not workable. Even such a prominent figure in the Aceh peace process Jusuf Kalla seems to be convinced that an armed separatist group has to be dealt with by arms.

All these pessimistic interpretations, however, overlook the broader reality of the effectiveness of peace dialogue around the world. Among the extensive research on peace-building, let us highlight two examples which deal with empirical evidence.

First is the 2012 Human Security Report. The report examines four different ways to end conflicts: Peace agreement, cease-fire, victory and other terminations during the period of 1950-2004. Statistical figures show that the effectiveness of peace agreement in ending conflict is slightly lower (32 percent) than cease-fires (38 percent).

But the report also demonstrates that although peace agreements are less stable than victories, they lead to a much greater reduction in battle deaths. The figure evinces a more than 80 percent reduction in death tolls after a peace agreement even if it fails and conflict restarts again. This effect does not apply to all other

types of terminations. Over all, a peace agreement is empirically more effective in stemming violence by addressing root causes of violence.

This process has resulted in the dramatic reduction in death tolls.

Second is Chenoweth and Stefanâ's *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (2011). Based on 323 case studies worldwide from 1900 to 2006, their research shows that nonviolent resistance was successful in 53 percent of cases in comparison to only 26 percent of armed struggles in achieving the objectives of a resistance movement. The core factors in the success of nonviolent methods lie in their ability to cause the defection of state security forces to take the side of nonviolent movements and to mobilize broad participation from a general public.

This study gives us good grounds to argue that in the long run nonviolent resistance in Papua, particularly the call for peace dialogue, is more likely to succeed than violent resistance. More importantly, the study suggests that nonviolent resistance is much more capable of broadening its participation, including from state security forces.

In other words, both examples give us empirical grounds to conclude that peace dialogues have worked effectively to end conflict in many contexts. Further, in comparison to other types of conflict resolution, peace dialogue works better in comprehensively addressing the root causes of violence. Therefore, we can adequately surmise that the same approach will likely work for Papua.

These studies also resonate with the existing Papuan peace initiatives under the banner Papua Land of Peace. This is not just a slogan.

Rather, it is the deeply philosophical and religious conviction of Papuan civil society, which reflects on the Papuan *memoria passionis* (memory of suffering) following the violent 1998 Biak incident. The *memoria passionis*, however, does not merely record the story of Papuan victimhood. Rather, it is all about the energy of change and the politics of hope to craft a better and just future.

The memory vividly preserves the 50-year history of Papuans and consolidates the energy of emancipation into the Papuan call for dialogue. This is the locus of the Papua Peace Network's passion for peace. This is the context in which the Tji Hak-Soon justice and

peace award for Father Neles Tebay must be understood.

The award has not only renewed Papuans' calls for a peace dialogue, but also shows the commitment of the international community to endorsing Father Tebayâ's tireless efforts for peace. The international community recognizes Papuan peacemaking. The world remains a strong believer in peace and justice.

The writer, a Franciscan friar and former director of the Office for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Church in Jayapura, Papua, is currently a PhD scholar at Regulatory Institutions Network, the Australian National University.

* The **Australia West Papua Assoc SA** are organising a Public meeting with Budi Hernawan, probably on July 9. Check the website: www.awpa-sa.org.au/ for further details. For the latest West Papua Report see:

www.etan.org/issues/wpapua/2013/1304wpap.htm



WOMADelaide 2013: AETFA and AWPAA have been sharing a stall now for a number of years

Nike workers claim military paid to intimidate them

ABC Radio AM News

By Indonesia correspondent George Roberts

Jan 15, 2013

Workers at a Nike shoe factory in Indonesia say the factory paid military personnel to intimidate them into working for less than the minimum wage.

After millions of workers went on strike last year in Indonesia over low pay and cost of living increases, the government lifted wage rates.

But workers at the Nike factory in the west Java city of Sukabumi say they were made to sign a petition

supporting the factory's claim to be exempt from paying the new wage.

In mobile phone footage of the factory, shown to the ABC, a man standing over workers can be heard telling them, "you all have to sign it".

The woman who took the footage does not want to be named, but says she and other workers tried to reject the pay restriction.

"We got summoned by military personnel that the company hired to interrogate us and they intimidated us," she said.

"The first thing that scared me was his high tone of voice and he banged the table.

"And also he said that inside the factory there were a lot of military intelligence officers. That scared me."

Unions in Indonesia say at least six Nike-contracted factories have applied to be exempt from paying the increased rate.

The Trade Union Rights Centre's Surya Tjandra says there is a loophole to get an exemption.

"You have to provide financial conditions of the company in the last two years which show some not profit, and then you have to accept some consent from the workers directly, which is not that easy because for the workers, the new wages is actually better and fairer," he said.

If the factory gets an exemption, the employees will get paid \$3.70 a day instead of \$4.

Activists say that after rent and transport to work, it is only enough to afford one meal.

One activist, Jim Keady, runs an American non-governmental organisation called Educating for Justice.

"I would say it is a clear violation of Nike's code of conduct and in a more general sense, the minimum wage is a poverty wage alone," he said.

"To pay less than the minimum wage I just think absolutely runs counter to Nike's public claims that they care about the welfare of their workers and they want to see them have decent lives."

Nike investigating

In a statement, a spokesman for Nike said the company is investigating.

"Nike expects contract factory workers to be paid at least the minimum wage required by country law and provide legally mandated benefits, including holidays and leave, and statutory severance when employment ends," the statement said.

The ABC asked Nike headquarters if the company is aware of the allegations about the use of military personnel and the intimidation of workers into accepting a lower than minimum wage.

After a pause, the spokesman said he would not get into details but that the company was investigating.

Mr Keady says the situation would be easy to fix.

"You really have to break it down in human terms," he said.

"Somebody like Phil Knight, the founder of Nike. The guy is worth \$10.3 billion. How much more do you need?"

If you made a billion less you could lift millions of people out of poverty.

"I'm not asking for charity - I don't want him to just give his money away. I'm talking about justice.

"Pay the people what they deserve. They've earned it. Give them a decent wage."

He says Nike made \$2.2 billion in profits last year and it would cost \$1 extra per pair of shoes to pay the minimum wage.

Websites of Interest

www.awpa-sa.org.au/

Australia West Papua Association (SA)

www.etan.org/

East Timor and Indonesia Action Network – U.S

www.laohamutuk.org/

La'o Hamutuk: Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis - keeping an eye on international activities in their country; working for decision-making by Timorese people.

www.mmiets.org.au/

Mary MacKillop East Timor Mission

<http://tapol.gn.apc.org/>

TAPOL (U.K.): Human Rights in Indonesia and East Timor

www.timorarchives.wordpress.com/ Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor Inc (CHART)

www.alola.org.au/

Alola Foundation - supporting the women and children of Timor-Leste
