

REVOLUTIONARY FRONT FOR AN INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR - FRETILIN  
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RESISTANCE

Senator Gordon McIntosh

It is with great appreciation for your total commitment to the cause of our People that I address you, on behalf of the armed resistance, as

an expression of our deepest gratitude for the continued and energetic action of a great and loyal friend of East Timor,

a confirmation of the tenacious armed opposition to the annexation of our Homeland for 12 long and difficult years and

a reaffirmation of our commitment to contribute, in the most positive and consistent way, to the search of a solution that is truly comprehensive and global and that, under international law and over time, ensures peace and stability in the region.

Senator, the phenomenon of [our] persistence has various political connotations in this war and in relation to all of us who, within or outside it, are active components [thereof], directly or indirectly involved in a cause that we consider to be just and legitimate. The belief that we are on the side of truth is the factor which nourishes and renews the extraordinary inner strength that enables us to constantly challenge the mountains of difficulties and to withstand the superficial views of politicians and parties, the complicity of many governments.

We are fully aware of how arduous the task is that all acknowledged faithful friends of our People intend to undertake among institutions of diverse nature and among governments that could at least recognize that the Maubere resistance is an act of legitimate defence and the annexation by force of a territory and the vandalism of the repression committed upon a People are unethical and contrary to international public law.

Senator, our People fight on, our People resist to ensure their own survival, to ensure their own existence as a People and to defend their own identity. Our People have a clear notion of what they aspire to and they only wish to hold their destiny in their own hands. Our People do not understand the laws or principles that the UN proclaimed ... to acknowledge the right of Peoples ... but our People are aware that East Timor is their homeland and, while living under the brutal repression of foreigners who came, by force of arms, to decimate them in their own homes, they realize that they have always been denied something that would allow them to freely feel that they are in possession of their own land. In fact, we think that it was a similar sentiment, a identical oppression in similar dominations, that served as a basis for proclaiming the Charter of the United Nations. A charter that legitimized the inalienable longing of Peoples to liberate themselves and that devised principles that contemplate those aspirations and standards to ensure the desirable and possible harmony between Peoples and states.

Our People fight on facing the silence of a powerful blockade that is sporadically eased for the collaborators of Jakarta. They press together deep down within themselves all their yearnings and hope of living. Our People don't know what, throughout the world, is being done to destroy their legitimate aspirations. But our People maintain a solid belief that they must continue to suffer and die so that they may obtain this right, since such right requires great perseverance in the struggle and the acceptance of all sacrifices. It is thus that one should understand what can be observed: the great, immense spirit of abnegation and the boundless determination that our People possess, indispensable factors that led them to endure all these years the ignominy of Indonesia's occupation. Those factors are components of their unwavering patriotism.

The Maubere people are unaware, therefore, of what has been done to justify the criminal actions of Jakarta. Still, they prefer to be exterminated than to accept foreign rule. The Maubere

people are also unaware of the solidarity that has been expressed by its faithful friends but know only that their demand is legitimate, because they reserve the right to reject the presence of the occupants and therefore they continue steadfastly to bear the consequences which this right imposes.

The Maubere people are not fighting under promises of whatever kind, they just know that they must fight on to preserve fundamentally what belongs to them, what they carry on pressed together deep in their hearts, what they wish to preserve as a perpetuation of themselves.

Senator, we have come to realize that the political interests of Governments that are generous to Jakarta want to force the Maubere people to accept a situation where they will have no other alternative then to submit to the criminal annexation of their Homeland in exchange for some merely historical palliatives that do not coincide with their sacred aspirations:

a - preserving so-called "cultural ties" with Portugal or, in other terms, the permission to speak Portuguese ... and they call this "cultural identity";

b- respect for the Catholic religion ...and they call this "religious identity" thus outlining '*grosso modo*' a theory about the "identity of the people of East Timor".

Although I must admit the influence of centuries of Portuguese presence, I should state, on the other hand, that the Maubere people never shed what constitutes the roots of their own identity, i.e all the aspects that make up their social substrate, their ways of thinking and acting. During the Portuguese colonial period, only a very small minority would truly be subject, by the imperatives of their own situation, to the Portuguese influence in the field of thought and culture. And even then, a large part of this minority continued to maintain an extremely close relationship with what was genuinely theirs, with what was part of themselves in an interplay of attitudes that never compromised with the physical and mandatory presence of the colonizers... despite an apparent separation.

Throughout these 12 years, the Maubere People have carried on with their struggle with the firm purpose of preserving everything that relates to their own identity as a People, and this sacred feeling is a vital element of their resistance, itself an act of survival.

Today, when outside [East Timor], both the UN and Jakarta's closest friends want to throw at our People a cosmetic identification card, the Maubere people feel bitterly that they are being compelled, by force of the economic interests of other countries and by the repression of Indonesian weapons, to absorb unwanted elements that will slowly dissolve in a structure of domination the genuine nature of their actions and of their thinking and will undermine the Maubere soul! Today, the Maubere People are compelled, by force of a military occupation, to condition their thinking, to change their ways of acting and to limit their culture merely to imposed external displays, that is, only when ordered to do so by the occupation authorities with objectives that are totally opposite [to their true nature], thus eliminating from such "cultural manifestations" the purity that formerly adorned their feelings!

If all the peoples in the world have pride in something that is theirs, something that identifies them before others, in their actions, in their character and in their daily experiences, that is, in a national heritage that gives them their collective personality which is distinct from others, then the Maubere people do not constitute an exception to this socio-historical and, we believe, also political phenomenon which is the tradition of each People! Our People are fighting very hard to preserve precisely this, their true identity, an historical and socio-cultural dignity, an identity that investments, closely associated with crimes, by democratic governments have helped drown into a colonial drama with no solution in sight and that a new theory of colonialisation intends to crush. We say new theory, Senator, because we know that the supporters of the annexation of East Timor proclaim to all who want to hear them that "the Portuguese were bad colonialists and that the Timorese People are better off under the Indonesians"...

Our People are conscious that they exist as such only because they walk the sacred ground of East Timor and they know that only in the Homeland that they reclaim as theirs will they be able to preserve their culture, customs and all forms of their thinking without any restrictions ... expressing themselves without fear, without coercion and without reservations in their daily lives ... and that is why they seek INDEPENDENCE! The independence of their Homeland is a vital issue for our People. Only in a free and independent East Timor can the Maubere People be assured that they will fulfil themselves as individuals, as a society and as a People and that they will be able to preserve the complex heritage that was left to them by their ancestors!

It is for this reason, Senator, that we will continue to cry out to the world and above all to those who condemn us for having such yearnings and for defending such aspirations. Nothing will shake our determination to continue to defend what is ours, from the sacred soil where our ancestors are buried to everything that can give a vivid colour to our own existence. Deep in our souls, we reject the colour that others want to impose on our Maubere skins!

The phenomenon of European colonization, as far as we understand it, only introduced in the process of the liberation of colonial Peoples one relevant factor that, in our limited understanding of things, we call 'historical identity', which comprises 2 aspects:

- delimitation of borders and a reciprocal action,
- cultural influence (always relative) of the colonizer, which is no more than a time-bound appendix to the cultural identity of the colonized people.

We believe, therefore, that the cultural identity of a People is something more profound that encompasses a complexity of relationships between the social-economic structure and the existential philosophy of that People that determine their conduct. All this is, therefore, beyond the simple influence imposed by the colonizer! We think that all this is an important factor that is enshrined in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, that is enshrined in the spirit of universal principles and in the spirit of international standards ...

What did not cause great distress to the Maubere People during the Portuguese colonization, although in certain aspects and at certain levels, it was noticeable that the colonial laws sought the destruction of the Timorese soul, has become a source of great concern over the last 12 years, due to the fact that the extreme cruelty of the murderous Indonesian troops literally restrict every aspect of the identity of our People, forcing an almost abrupt assimilation of all that is imposed by the occupiers.

It is to preserve the MAUBERE SOUL that the PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR ardently aspire to their independence, an indispensable condition to be able to exercise freely their rights and that is why, for them, to RESIST IS ...

#### A PATRIOTIC ACT OF SURVIVAL AS A PEOPLE!!!

Senator, internally we face immense difficulties namely of a subjective nature ... because we are not politicians and the fact that we are leading the Maubere Resistance was only made possible due to the demands of an absolutely critical situation, where [leadership] had to be ensured at whatever cost.

Unfortunately, we have been bearing the brunt of our unpreparedness at all levels, and only a tenacious persistence in defending the sacred aspirations of our People allowed us, little by little and at great cost, to acquire and subsequently to extend a more correct and realistic vision of the problem ... which involved death and destruction, blood and sacrifices!

Initially, as could only be, we could only walk along the path that had been indicated to us, as we were unaware of other possibilities of taking more open and perhaps less thorny courses. At the time, our moral disposition, interpreted as a political commitment, favoured the ratification of everything that had previously been conceived and erected over our corpses and cemented with our own blood. The consequences of the anti-communism of the faction of Alarico Fernandes, which had conceded to the annexation of the Homeland, urged us to affirm our principles in the opposite

direction, because only thus (as we believed then and actually happened) would we be able to save the Armed Resistance. There was neither time nor did we have the conceptual readiness to refrain from taking a dangerous course that, like a snowball would drag all potential friends of our Struggle to the Indonesian side.

It was a political mistake that today we consciously acknowledge for its seriousness and implications but that yesterday seemed inevitable... The outcome of a complex situation that we ourselves were not able to sustain at the time., And so it happened that we threw ourselves heads first into the huge waves that now pound us without mercy! Today, we want everybody to know that we have placed again the Maubere Resistance under the banner of NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. That we have dissociated ourselves from the party political commitments that we had entered into ever since we took over the command the STRUGGLE of our People, fully convinced that we [thus] serve our HOMELAND and with the steadfastness that these conscious decisions require, f! Our disengagement concerns in particular the rejection of Marxism which has coated our resistance with a childish extremism that is counter-productive. The Armed Resistance was always framed within the political objectives of FRETILIN and, in this regard, we want to make it clear that we will do everything within our reach to prevent the establishment of a left-wing regime in East Timor and will strive for and advocate constitutional democratic freedoms!

We think, Senator, that we have finally added to our previous commitments an important element to make our policy of openness credible once and for all. A policy that always had the objective, on the one hand, of assuring the countries in the region, including Australia and New Zealand, that not only do we not represent a threat but that it is our wish to contribute to peace and security in the region; and, on the other hand, to make certain that the people of East Timor do have the right to exist as a friendly, free and independent People!

Senator, the Maubere People will continue to require your vigorous actions, as well as that of your faithful friends within the ALP, to reach out to the most inflexible sectors of the Party and ask them to look at the People of East Timor with a more understanding and fairer attitude!

However, we are aware that any sign of political willingness that we may show with a view to seeking a just solution that will, at the same time, put an end to the permanent violation of the fundamental freedoms and rights in East Timor and respect international standards – that any such political gesture from our side will inevitably face the unfounded and negative attitude of the Australian Government towards the struggle of our People and its refusal to see it in a positive light and aligned with the democratic principles that they themselves uphold. We do not expect, therefore, any shift in the attitude of the Government of Mr. Bob Hawke, since its policy towards East Timor, as far as we can see, revolves around 3 doctrinal axis:

- the first is its acceptance of the use of force by Jakarta to achieve political objectives of a shared strategy;
- the second is its concern in safeguarding the economic interests of Australia to the detriment of the principles that a democratic country like Australia upholds and advocates; and
- the third is the ambition to exploit the oil and natural gas resources in the sea south of East Timor.

Only a political doctrine based on such calculations can justify arguments that are both unacceptable and unethical by a country which, we believe, could use its advantageous geographical location in the region and with greater neutrality and independence, play the role of a bastion of universal principles and international standards. After all, in other parts of the globe, regional efforts are aimed at finding global solutions to the various conflicts. On the contrary, in the case of East Timor, Australia opted for a position of total complicity with Indonesia's crimes. Despite the powerful blockade that has isolated us from the rest of the world, we have been able to catch some glimpses, some anecdotal evidence of what is happening around our cause. These are the difficult constraints of our struggle that do not allow us to develop a deeper and more

comprehensive view about what the accomplices of Jakarta have been saying and claiming to give to the criminal occupation of East Timor the irreversible "nature" of an annexation. What follows is not a refutation, point by point, of the arguments put forward by those who question our rights. Because we are not familiar with such arguments, we simply intend to present a summary of the issues that we think are essential. Our presentation is not based on laws (which we ignore) nor on principles (although we invoke them as we have heard about them and have a basic understanding of their effects), but is based on what we understand (which is only possible because we have been hearing about them throughout the war and our addressees have played a relevant role in this) to be (as far as we can understand them in our limited way controversial matters when it comes to seeing the 'fact' as 'accomplished'. We do not claim to have Indonesia's argumentative skills which the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Alatas displayed while ambassador to the UN when he referred, for instance, to a meaningless and imaginary detail, that of "Portugal having secretly supplied weapons to FRETILIN" ... when he should have spoken about agreements with Lisbon and Canberra for the invasion ... or other oddities such as the fact that "Portugal was not present at the adoption of Resolution 1514" or that "the people of East Timor no longer think of Portugal", etc., etc., that only the veteran diplomats are entitled to use, as well as in Geneva, where the Indonesian Ambassador refused to debate the issue of four Timorese students detained in Jakarta, alleging on the grounds that agreements had been reached with CIC or had the nerve to state that his country has legislation to prevent torture, when just recently Indonesian lawyers questioned the legalised violence [committed by the authorities]...

1. As I said earlier, we do not understand international standards and we can only understand that the RIGHT OF PEOPLES is inalienable inasmuch as it was [formally] proclaimed in acknowledgment of the aspirations of each and every people of the world, big or small, weak or powerful, rich or poor.

It was by interpreting those aspirations (aspirations that also apply to the Australian people, who have the right to seek separation from the United Kingdom, although the majority of the Australian population originated there - at least during the initial period of establishment of a European colony on the continent, an historic event whose bicentenary it celebrates this year) – it was by interpreting those aspirations that the right to self-determination and national independence was adopted as a universal principle. And it was also during the period when many peoples were still under colonial rule and openly manifested their yearning for freedom that Resolution 1514 was adopted, whose words and spirit foresee alternatives for its implementation. However, those alternatives must be enforced in a credible, and therefore legal, manner and in accordance with the provisions of international law.

As we have done before, we claim that the people of East Timor were not granted an opportunity to express before the international community their views on their destiny and this is the legal base that underpins our rejection of the shallow and convenient argument used by Indonesians and of their accomplices that the People of East Timor have already "exercised" their right to self-determination... on 2 occasions ... during elections in Indonesia!

The Australian Government and the pro-Indonesian (or pro-Timor GAP) sectors have been hanging on to this argument that Indonesia likes to emphasize in its propaganda. Australia questions or did question the political developments in FIJI (an independent and sovereign country that is addressing its internal problems) but, in the case of East Timor, the Australian Government deliberately ignores the nature of the so-called elections which were not more than a gross contrivance by Jakarta, intent on blindfolding the international community and letting its accomplices have a field day!

We claim that actions of this nature that could only be carried out because of the military occupation, can never be considered a true exercise of the right to self-determination, as it is evident that the Maubere People did not have other possibilities to choose from. The systematic onslaught against human rights and the total absence of freedoms encapsulate a situation of constant intimidation that can only be explained by the military presence of the occupiers. As such, these alleged "consultations" lack the necessary credibility and legal nature to be considered an exercise of the right to self-determination. If the current government set-up in FIJI can be rejected by Australia, then we believe that there is a far more compelling argument to say that the administrative elections in East Timor under Indonesian military occupation cannot be considered as an "expression" of the East Timorese's wish to be integrated.

2. The argument commonly used by those who advocate the "irreversibility of annexation" is that the [East Timor] issue has existed for a very long time without a solution. In arguing thus, they simply pass in silence the important contribution that they themselves made to Indonesia not only by dragging the problem but above all by placing themselves on the side of Jakarta to promote the theory of the "accomplished fact", while at the same time providing the murderers of our People with all sort of aid .

The time factor is used as an argument of great legal significance and suggests that the responsibilities, if not of a political then at least of a moral nature, for the suffering of the Maubere People have been forgotten. But the same argument is not considered in order to accept, for example, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan nor the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, both of which occurred nine years ago. Or furthermore, (why not say it?) the apartheid system in South Africa! The time [argument] did not play a role either in the stances adopted by the ALP and the Australian Government in 1986, when Australia was co-sponsor of the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations that reinstated New Caledonia in the list of non-autonomous territories, despite the fact that it had been withdrawn from it in 1947, that is, 39 years before!

To supplement the time argument, and because the People of East Timor do not have any possibility whatsoever of engaging in an armed confrontation under conditions such as those of the "mujahedin" in Afghanistan or the democratic coalition in Cambodia, it is also common and easy to state that the Maubere People "have already accepted integration". Only an utter lack of scruples can produce such a stance of total accommodation with crime and injustice! Australia could, for example, take on a role more compatible with the need to reflect on the problem of East Timor. In such a role it would put openly to us the issue of regional security as a factor that is strategically important for an adequate solution to the conflict... instead of adjusting its immoral policies to the immorality of crimes!

3. Who does indeed have the right [to self-determination]? - this is a question that often comes to our minds when we hear silly statements both from Jakarta and in Australia.

The right – this right to self-determination that is repeatedly claimed for Afghanistan and Cambodia and that adorned the speech of the Australian Ambassador to the UN in support of New Caledonia – twho can claim it after all in the case of East Timor?

Jakarta, that brutally invaded East Timor and throughout its 12 years of military occupation has been decimating the Timorese population?

Portugal, that appears as the administrating power in a conflict taking place tens of thousands of kilometres away?

or the Maubere People who suffer in their bodies and souls the tragic effects of a merciless war, who have experienced the martyrdom of persecution, torture, imprisonment, exile, disappearances, threats, in one word, all of Indonesia's inhumanity with the blessing of Western countries?The Secretary-General of the United Nations himself addresses the problem from the

point of view of "a dispute between Lisbon and Jakarta" resulting from the annexation of East Timor, to evade the obligation of correctly interpreting the spirit and letter of Resolution 37/30 in what concerns the interested parties. If the UN recognizes the right of East Timor to self-determination and independence, in practical terms its behaviour has demonstrated that it toes Jakarta's line thus favouring the annexation by force of the Maubere Homeland.

In Australia, Mr. Bob Hawke stated with unprecedented pro-Indonesian (or pro-Timor Gap?) ardour that "FRETILIN does not represent anything". Enlightened by the statements of the Australian Prime Minister, [General] Beni Moerdani has in turn proclaimed recently that the "about 500 [fighters] cannot represent the right to independence"!

The right, after all, is measured by the number of resistance fighters who oppose foreign military occupation? Of course these two as well as others have never thought about the fact that a half-island that shares a border with its own invaders cannot provide the world with millions of refugees. That is also why in 1984 Mr. Bill Hayden predicted the imminent defeat of FRETILIN when the Indonesians generals informed him that they would employ all available means to exterminate the guerrillas once and for all.

If, to use their argument, it is numbers that matter, do not then the thousands of East Timorese refugees abroad and those who were not lucky enough to leave East Timor in rejection of the presence of the Indonesian occupiers, the tens of thousands of prisoners and uprooted people reflect some measure of that right? Or do the murderous Indonesian troops represent the right to military occupation? If so, why object to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan when that country continues to be independent after all?

If it is numbers that matter, the more than 200,000 East Timorese who gave their lives for their Homeland do not suffice to embody the right to self-determination? If their numbers are still too small, does that mean that we have to agree that the murderous Indonesian troops represent a weightier right, that of annexation? If so, why condemn the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam which, according to Hanoi, it launched at the request of the current government of Phnom-Pen and was not an annexation?

If it is numbers that matter, from 7 December 1975 until the end of 1978, more than 90% of the population of East Timor was in the mountains resisting the aggression of their Homeland, while Indonesia, with help from Australia itself, bombed the popular bases of the resistance and their murderous troops advanced and looted everything in their path... What about rights then? Was it the Indonesian forces that embodied the sacred right to invade East Timor? And why then, some 41 years before, did Australia use East Timor as the stage for a war that sowed death outside its territory? Why didn't Australia confront the Japanese in Australia itself, since Japan should also have had the right to invade?

If it is numbers that matter, we believe that a certain measure of political honesty will lead anyone to conclude that 12 years of terror and deprivation of all freedoms, that 12 years of permanent physical, mental and moral repression suffice to claim to some degree the right [to self-determination]!!!

We think that it is Peoples who have the right and not Liberation Movements. The latter, we believe, only identify themselves with such right. This being the case, we feel that it is immoral to limit such right with the argument that we are merely "50" or even "about 500". To refuse the right to the Maubere People on the grounds of the number of remaining resistants is to deny the right itself... [we must conclude,] after all, [that] the right of the "mujahedin" and of the armed opposition in Cambodia to fight for their Homeland, their right to self-determination, was acknowledged on the basis of the millions of resistants to foreign occupation that they are able to

present to the world ! [But] what to say then of New Caledonia, where there is no armed struggle and the violence practiced by the Kanaks has been called into question?

4. All these are inescapable features of our Struggle and we consider them them to be prominent aspects of our war of resistance to the vile Indonesian military occupation. However, they are not taken into account in order to validate another strong argument that is currently central to the efforts of Indonesian diplomacy to present to the world a "vertiginous development" [in East Timor] ... as a result of which, according to them, the East Timorese population would be "better off under Indonesian rule".

Mr. Bob Hawke (at a time when we most needed Australian support to encourage us on the road to greater political openness, a move that we had by then begun) described us in a frenzy as a "Banana Republic". If his intention was to slight the Leadership of the Struggle for not having Mr Bob Hawke's intellect, we are not ashamed by this truth ... Our People do not know how to read and write but they know how to think and they know and feel that they are victims of the world's injustice, that they are victims of Indonesian savagery and that they are victims of Australian betrayal! But if Mr. Bob Hawke's depiction derives from his belief that East Timor is an impoverished country that does not have a minimum of natural conditions to achieve social and economic progress with the support of all, we can only regret the fact that he, as well as the Australian Government, have decided to overlook, and very inappropriately so, that we have, for example, a "TIMOR GAP" that estimates suggest could produce hundreds of thousands of barrels a day! And it isn't just under the sea south of the Maubere Homeland that oil is to be found: there is oil in Suai; there is natural gas in Aliambata and in Pualaka. There are even people who claim that if we use the water course that leaves the lagoon of Ira-lalaru (on the Lospalos plain) and that "flows into" the northern base of Mount Paitxau by perforating the mountain, we will have the cheapest energy facility in the world with the ability to supply energy all the way to Kupang... .. Furthermore, there are experts who describe the soil of East Timor as being very fertile and "suitable for the production of a wide range of agricultural products"... from coffee (our Arabica variety was considered the best in the world) to rice, from wheat to cotton, from maize to sugarcane etc., etc... [who mention] the country's potential in livestock farming and mining, with experts referring to "great mineral riches" such as coal and marble and claiming that throughout the territory "traces of iron, copper and other minerals including gold" can be found ... [Those experts] also claim that the areas of "Bibissusso, Samora, Turiskai and Fatuloro are cut by streams where there is an abundance of gold powder from their springs to close to their mouths". They emphasise that the gold of Fatuloro is "22 karat gold" and that of Bibissusso "21.3 karat" and they recall that "traces of gold were also found in Vemasse"!!! Hence we wonder... what has Mr Bob Hawke to say of the many [countries] that have already achieved independence but are among the poorest on the planet; or what does he think of the independent islands in the Pacific, some of which, so we've heard, only have copra to export and tourism to obtain foreign currencies... or those whose national budgets depend almost or exclusively on the fishing licenses granted in their territorial waters? If we were to consider them from the point of view of development, such states should not have the right to self-determination! In terms of "minimal conditions" for our development, it is not so much the case that East Timor is a "Banana Republic" for we may well become a "Petroleum Republic"!

But everything leads us to believe that Australian policy towards East Timor was determined by Indonesia's offer of a joint exploitation of the "TIMOR GAP", whose agreement(s) Mr. Bill Hayden finalised in Jakarta recently . We would like to remind the Australian Government that, in our view, the Australian Government's agreement by itself is an act of theft and that exploitation by Indonesia is an act of plundering. We are not familiar with the laws but we think that this is how things should be understood ! And we recall that we would not reject the participation of Australia in the exploitation [of the resources], all the more so because the people of

East Timor would enjoy better possibilities to direct their steps towards progress and to fulfil their political rights and economic development.

5. However, the people of East Timor are confronted with economic interests that have led [others] to make idiosyncratic and unfair distinctions with regard to violations of international standards and above all of human rights. This is the political basis that until now has allowed Australia to adopt attitudes that are, on the one hand, cynical and, on the other hand, dishonest.

Both the Australian Government and ACTU [Australian Council of Trade Unions] have expressed an "exaggerated" concern with the (internal) events in FIJI, whereas in the case of East Timor it is claimed that it is an "internal matter of Indonesia". We haven't heard so far of anyone being massacred, imprisoned or tortured in FIJI, but economic sanctions were immediately imposed to force "a return to democracy" and the "issue" of FIJI has almost become a fundamental issue of Australia's foreign policy. However, when it comes to East Timor, the Australian Government turns a blind eye to the abusive breach of human rights committed by murderous Indonesian troops. The situation in FIJI and East Timor serve to highlight a common point: the destiny of small and weak Peoples is manipulated by regional and world powers. To such an extent that Australia joined Indonesia with no reservations and rushed to condemn the French presence in New Caledonia in the context of a specific UN initiative while, on the other hand, it felt no pangs of conscience in joining Indonesia and pressing the international community to accept the barbaric aggression and the criminal military occupation of East Timor as an "accomplished fact" utterly disregarding the ongoing resistance to the brutal repression of the Maubere People.

In the case of FIJI, Colonel (now Brigadier) Ranbuka was condemned in no uncertain terms, whereas in the case of East Timor, every single claim by the Indonesian generals is immediately and wholeheartedly accepted... as an irrefutable truth... Surely it must also have something to do with numbers: in one case, there was only one Colonel [involved] whereas in the other case, so we hear, there are a few thousand people involved between those on active duty, those who have retired and the diplomats!

We know that, once again, the Maubere People will have to face the callousness of the Australians authorities. Once they get to know this document, they will reaffirm without delay their continued recognition of the criminal annexation of East Timor. However, as leaders of the Resistance of our People, we have come to understand that the true essence of the problem must be found in the regional doctrine aimed at preventing a communist infiltration. That is why we have sought to eliminate all the obstacles that until now have prevented the emergence of a different perspective on [our] case. We are aware that it is almost impossible to reverse the official policy of the Australian Government. However we believe that if there is political will and moral honesty to act, Canberra might possibly reconsider its stance and adopt an attitude that is more beneficial towards the people of East Timor, thus contributing to the rehabilitation of universal principles and stimulating dialog and a spirit of good neighbourly relations and cooperation between the Peoples of the region and the People of East Timor.

We also understand that the relations between Jakarta and Canberra are the focus of Australian concerns but we are of the opinion that, should there be a stronger sense of justice and a modicum of willingness to seek peace, those relations can become an instrument of persuasion and lead to a political attitude of both [governments] that is more considerate towards the continuing suffering and the true expectations of our People. Such a reevaluation of t[he Government's] stance will only dignify the people and the Government of Australia and will be a tribute to the many Australians who, 41 years ago, sealed with their blood the bonds of friendship between the two peoples, Australian and Maubere!

... ---oOo--- ...

Senator, we have always thought that the principle of the balance of forces in the region entails geopolitical obligations that we must accept so that our independence gives to the countries in the region and to the world guarantees that we acknowledge our insertion in Southeast Asia.

With this in mind, we make a pledge to undertake an in-depth review of the political objectives of FRETILIN and to redefine the Party's social-democratic principles at a first National Conference with all the members of FRETILIN, including necessarily those who are outside the territory. To this [commitment] I add the following points which are supplementary to the PEACE PLAN presented in 1983:

- our commitment not to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba, Libya, Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union and other countries whose presence affects the regional interests;
- our acceptance, before the countries of the region, of the conditions relating to the status of our army, which shall only be a self-defence force; during the transition period when political and economic conditions shall be created for an independent East Timor, Portugal will take responsibility for the defence of the territory (or multi-national forces, depending on the circumstances) and, according to the conditions laid down above, the supply of military hardware will be guaranteed exclusively by Portugal;
- an agreement with Jakarta by which we commit ourselves to expel any individuals that threaten the security of the Indonesian State and are intent on using East Timor as a safe haven; in such an agreement we shall publicly commit ourselves to denying any support to internal dissent in Indonesia (something that was both expected and mentioned by Lieutenant Colonel Iswanto as well as by the puppet "gubernur" and by Father Filipe Belo, who all had a chance to try and convince us that we should expect an [ensuing] Indonesian hecatomb);
- our willingness to accept that the "development" that was promoted to "conquer the hearts and minds of the Timorese" (as a principle of anti-subversive war... that had no effect whatsoever, despite fascinating a few well-to-do people!) will be evaluated in terms of debt, inscribed in the agreements relating to Indonesian aid and with special payment conditions!
- Whereas the East Timor issue is an issue of international scope (and therefore would not be solved by our surrender or our extermination), in the sense that the aggression against East Timor is an affront to international law and also because the situation of permanent military occupation contradicts the universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and calls into question all the efforts undertaken by the UN in addressing various conflicts in other regions of the globe;
- Whereas our present proposals are the clearest and most unequivocal evidence of our wish to contribute effectively and decisively to REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY, we appeal to the international community and we demand that the Secretary General of the UN and we also ask the Australian Government to pressure Jakarta to accept an immediate ceasefire, thus allowing for the establishment of broader political contacts between Portugal, Indonesia, the Nationalist Convergence [Convergência Nacionalista] and the Armed Resistance, under the supervision of the UN with a view to debating the implementation of the PEACE PLAN presented by Fretilin in 1983.

We believe that the political conditions that we have presented can (and should) be considered in the context of stimulating a political solution that safeguards universal principles and points towards a future dialog that does not bring discredit to anyone, with a view to eliminating divergences and, above all, preventing the reinforcement of inflexible attitudes which should be dismissed at a time when circumstances require greater flexibility and cooperation among Peoples! We believe that the Australian Government has a special role to play in the regional context in finding a solution to the East Timor issue. And, as regards Jakarta, we also think that we have demonstrated sufficiently [that] none of the parties [in the conflict] should consider themselves losers nor winners. A fair assessment of the issue could and should lead both parties to conclude that, despite the violent and scandalous nature of process, common objectives of preventing

possible threats to destabilise the region have been reached and that rational mechanisms were identified to eliminate mistrust and to ensure that an independent East Timor will itself be a factor to guarantee peace and stability.

Finally, we call on the Indonesian Government to believe in our political earnestness and in the moral resolve with which we now adopt [new] attitudes towards a constructive dialog. It is now up to Indonesia to take on its role and to regain its international reputé that was undermined by the military occupation of East Timor!

HOMELAND OR DEATH!  
THE FIGHT CONTINUES ON ALL FRONTS!  
TO RESIST IS TO WIN!

To conclude, Senator, please accept an embrace from all our guerrilla fighters!

With consideration and respect,

XANANA GUSMÃO

[Stamped 10 Apr 1988?]

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