SEA POWER CENTRE - AUSTRALIA

STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY: THE COMBINED NAVAL ROLE IN OPERATION STABILISE

Working Paper No. 20 David Stevens

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In 1992 he graduated from the Australian National University with an MA (Strategic Studies) and in 2000 received his PhD in history from the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy. He is a member of the advisory board of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies and has been a member of the editorial board of Headmark: The Journal of the Australian Naval Institute, The Journal of Australian Naval History, and The Great Circle: Journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History. He is also a member of the Australian Dictionary of Biography military subcommittee and has contributed several biographies to this publication. He has lectured widely on Australia's military strategy, maritime strategy, modern naval developments and naval history. His published work has been translated into a number of languages, including French, German, Japanese and Czechoslovakian.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACC Air Component Commander

ADF Australian Defence Force

AO Area of Operations

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AUTODIN Automatic Digital Network

C4I Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence

CINCPAC Commander in Chief Pacific

CITE Canadian Joint Task Force

COMAST Commander Australian Theatre

COMFLOT Commodore Flotillas

CPX Command Post Exercise
CTF Commander Task Force
CTG Commander Task Group

DISN Defense Information Systems Network

DJFHQ Deployable Joint Force Headquarters

DSN Defence Secret Network

FALINTIL The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor Leste

FS French Ship

GCCS Global Command and Control System

HMAS Her Majesty's Australian Ship
 HMCS Her Majesty's Canadian Ship
 HMNZS Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship

HMS Her Majesty's Ship

HODSU Hydrographic Office Detached Survey Unit

INTERFET International Force East Timor

NATO

LST Landing Ship Tank

MEU Marine Expeditionary Unit

MHQ Maritime Headquarters

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation NCC **Naval Component Commander**

NIPRNET Non-Secure Internet Protocol Router Network

OTCIXS Officer in Tactical Command Information Exchange Subsystem

SIPRNET Secret Internet Protocol Router Network

RAN Royal Australian Navy

RAAF Royal Australian Air Force

RNZAF Royal New Zealand Air Force

RNZN Royal New Zealand Navy

ROE Rules of Engagement

SAE Services Assisted Evacuation SPC-A Sea Power Centre - Australia

TNI Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian armed forces)

UN **United Nations**

UNAMET United Nations Mission in East Timor

UNTAET United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor

UNSC **United Nations Security Council**

US **United States**

USFI United States Forces INTERFET

USMC United States Marine Corps

USS **United States Ship**

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Introduction

The management of the Coalition is the biggest issue.

Commodore J.R. Stapleton, RAN, Naval Component Commander, Operation STABILISE

The successful INTERFET (International Force East Timor) deployment from September 1999 to February 2000 constituted crisis intervention rather than outright conflict; its aim was to provide a peaceful and secure environment in which the United Nations (UN) could conduct humanitarian assistance and nation building. But for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) it became a watershed, marking not only the largest single deployment of Australian military forces overseas since World War II, but also the first time that Australia had provided the core force for a UN-mandated peace enforcement operation. Both these aspects had more than transitory significance, for they demonstrated the willingness of the Australian Government to employ the ADF offshore in a manner that few local defence analysts or policy-makers had expected. Instead of operating in its traditional role of junior partner in either a British or American-led coalition in East Timor, Australia acted as the chief contributor and lead nation: 'that nation with the will and capability, competence, and influence to provide the essential elements of political consultation and military leadership to coordinate the planning, mounting, and execution of a Coalition military operation'.¹

Involvement in the INTERFET deployment, Operation STABILISE, nevertheless severely stretched the ADF's available resources and revealed a yawning gap between advertised and actual capability. Evolving from the post-Vietnam War pullback from the South East Asian region the existing 'Defence of Australia' doctrine was 'threat-based', and had envisioned the ADF primarily providing defence-in-depth for the Australian mainland.² In effect, the high technology assets operated by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) would allow control of the nation's surrounding sea and air approaches, leaving the Australian Army to deal with any enemy forces that managed to leak through the barrier.³ Such a strategy left the Army, in particular, with little capability for, or doctrinal interest in, the projection of military power at a distance. Yet, as the situation in East Timor developed into the most serious regional crisis since the Vietnam War, it seemed inevitable that Australia would need to mount an expeditionary force to intervene, and that such intervention would need to be substantial to halt the escalating violence.

From the start, ADF planners recognised the need to assert INTERFET's authority across all levels of a fractured society, making face-to-face contact with both potential belligerents and local supporters vital. This inevitably placed a high priority on assembling a broad-based coalition willing to deploy significant forces ashore. The tendency at the time and subsequently to examine the operation primarily in terms of 'boots on the ground' has, however, served to seriously skew our more general understanding of the part played by other elements.

In fact INTERFET was very much a joint and a combined force, ⁶ as its commander, the then Major General Peter Cosgrove, unhesitatingly acknowledged, and the naval presence was not 'an incidental, nice to have "add on"'. Rather, Cosgrove continued, 'it was an important indicator of international resolve and most reassuring to all of us who relied on sea lifelines'. ⁷ Yet, more than this, the capability, responsiveness and flexibility of the coalition's naval assets ensured INTERFET could operate in a secure environment, allowed in-theatre mobility, and then offered continuing sustainment. 'Mass,' as maritime strategist Norman Friedman underlines in *Seapower as Strategy*, 'has to come by sea.' ⁸ In terms of logistics support, multinational sea power provided the essential foundation that allowed the remainder of INTERFET to function as a credible military force.

It is within this context of Coalition maritime interdependence, or 'strength through diversity', that we can most usefully examine the combined naval role in East Timor. Australia did not have the maritime assets available to go in alone, even had such an option



The RAN's Heavy Lift Ship HMAS Tobruk approaches Dili Wharf to unload her cargo of Australian Army trucks and equipment.

been desirable. Close to seamless cooperation, something that Western navies have long looked upon as their operational bedrock, proved vital to both the provision of appropriate capabilities and to getting the best out of individual force elements

Background

Situated just south of the equator between the Timor and Banda Seas, the island of Timor is at the eastern end of the Lesser Sunda Archipelago and some 400 nautical miles from the nearest large Australian port at Darwin. Mountainous, thickly vegetated and poorly developed, the island is about 470 kilometres long and 110 kilometres wide. Politically and culturally, it is divided into two. West Timor, a former Dutch colony, passed to the new Republic of Indonesia in 1949 with the dissolution of the Dutch East Indies, East Timor on the other hand, had been colonised by Portugal. Not until 1975, following a regime change in Lisbon, did moves begin to replace the colonial administration with a popular assembly. In a sad foretaste of future events, Portugal proved unable to control the violent clashes between those East Timorese who sought independence and those favouring integration with Indonesia, and effectively abandoned the territory to civil war. On the pretext of restoring order Indonesia invaded on 7 December 1975 and assisted the pro-integration parties in establishing a provisional government. Ignoring calls by both the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly to respect East Timor's territorial integrity, the Indonesian parliament formally incorporated the province into the Republic on 17 July 1976.9



Thereafter the General Assembly routinely reaffirmed the right of East Timor's 800,000 people to self-determination, but largely limited practical assistance to the promotion of dialogue between the various interest groups. These measures did little to quell local dissatisfaction with the profound social changes imposed by the Indonesian administration, or prevent the province from remaining a serious internal security problem. The continuing large military presence not only overwhelmed any attempts at normality, but also ensured that the Indonesian armed forces (TNI)¹⁰ dominated the development process. Moreover, in attempting to cut off pro-independence guerrilla groups from popular support, the TNI regularly resorted to a heavy-handed policy, which kept international attention focused on Indonesia's poor human rights record. 11 Events such as the well-documented 1991 massacre in the East Timorese capital of Dili simply highlighted the depth of the continuing tragedy.12

The first real hopes for reform in the territory came with another external regime change. In May 1998, Indonesian President Suharto's 31 years of authoritarian rule came to an end, and the following month the new president, B.J. Habibie, announced that his administration might be prepared to give East Timor special status within the Republic. Subsequent Tripartite Talks between Indonesia, Portugal and the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, eventually reached agreement on the use of a direct ballot to determine East Timorese willingness to either accept substantial internal autonomy or formally separate from Indonesia. 13 Responsibility for arranging the popular consultation fell to the UN, and in June 1999 the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), involving almost 300 civilian police officers and 50 military liaison officers. UNAMET did not have a mandate to enforce security, but Resolution 1236, adopted on 7 May 1999, had already stressed the Indonesian Government's responsibility to ensure the safety of international staff and observers.14

At this time the TNI maintained some 18,000 troops in East Timor. But far more volatile were the more than 20,000 members of various armed militia groups that supported internal autonomy over independence and planned to influence the vote through a widespread campaign of intimidation. Command and materiel linkages between the TNI and militia were clear to outside observers, even if 'the extent to which TNI's actions on the ground were sanctioned by, or ordered from Jakarta' remained murky. 15 The pro-independence FALINTIL (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor Leste) guerrilla army, by contrast, could deploy just 2000 fighters and was then following a policy of restraint. 16 Militia activity became more intense during July 1999, with threats made against UNAMET staff and thousands of East Timorese forced to leave their homes. Despite a three-week delay caused by the community unrest, the ballot was held successfully on 30 August 1999. Some 95 per cent of registered voters went to the polls, and more than 78 per cent of these chose to reject the autonomy proposal and opt instead for independence.¹⁷

The result, however, sparked an escalating campaign of planned retributive violence.
Unwilling to accept their loss, militia groups, at times supported or sanctioned by Indonesian security forces, rampaged through towns attacking residents, burning homes and destroying local infrastructure. Over the next few weeks several thousand East Timorese were murdered while another 500,000 fled to safety.
Indonesia emphatically denied any TNI involvement and initially opposed all suggestions of a foreign security presence; but its own attempts to restore order, including a declaration of martial law, had little or no effect. On 8 September, following the deaths of four local UNAMET workers, the UN announced its total withdrawal. Calls from the international community for action on the deepening humanitarian crisis grew more strident, and over the next week the UN Secretary-General maintained constant contact with President Habibie and those foreign states likely to play a key role in mounting and supporting a peace enforcement operation. On 12 September, Habibie bowed at last to the international pressure and announced Indonesia's readiness to accept external assistance. Three days later the UNSC adopted Resolution 1264:

Determining that the present situation in East Timor constitutes a threat to peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations ... Authorizes the establishment of a multinational force under a unified command structure, pursuant to the request of the Government of Indonesia conveyed to the Secretary-General on 12 September 1999, with the following tasks: to restore peace and security in East Timor, to protect and support UNAMET in carrying out its tasks and, within force capabilities, to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations, and authorizes the States participating in the multinational force to take all necessary measures to fulfil this mandate.²¹

The Secretary-General had earlier invited Australia to lead the multinational force.²² In officially announcing Australia's acceptance, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer expressed his delight that the Security Council resolution was unanimous and stronglyworded. Unusual for the UN, the mandate was 'unambiguous and clear cut'.²³ Indeed, in comparison with most other UN-sponsored missions, there were several remarkable features about the INTERFET deployment, not least the speed with which it was mounted followed by its clear and unqualified success. Elated by the partnership established

between the UN and the people of East Timor, Secretary-General Annan soon proudly held up INTERFET as a model peace-enforcement operation.²⁴ For Australians, however, perhaps the most notable feature of Operation STABILISE was that it had taken place under their leadership.



An INTERFET soldier stops for a chat with an East Timorese child in the devastated town of Suai.

Preparation and Planning

An archipelago comprising more than 17,000 islands, Indonesia is both the largest and most populous nation in South East Asia, and shares with Australia over a thousand miles of maritime boundary. As more than one foreign policy analyst has noted, Australia needs Indonesia more than Indonesia needs Australia, 25 and this strategic reality was reinforced regularly in the security context:

Our defence relationship with Indonesia is our most important in the region and a key element in Australia's approach to regional defence engagement. It is underpinned by an increasing awareness of our shared strategic interests and perceptions.²⁶

Like most of the Western world, Australia, while expressing concern for humanitarian issues, had readily acquiesced to Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor. Three years later the Australian Government announced its decision to 'recognise de facto' that the province was part of Indonesia.²⁷ Notwithstanding the objections of a vocal East Timorese lobby, Australian politicians had thereafter trod warily around the issue, seemingly unwilling to risk trade and security ties with their most important neighbour.²⁸ Even so, as evidence mounted of the deliberate pattern of violence and intimidation in the first months of 1999, the situation garnered increasing political attention. Buoyed by growing international and public demands for action, East Timor rapidly moved from its position as an irritant in the bilateral relationship to the top of Australia's regional foreign policy agenda.²⁹

The flaring of ethnic tensions within several Indonesian provinces in the wake of President Suharto's departure had already raised Australian fears of a wider descent into lawlessness. President Habibie enjoyed an uncertain legitimacy in Indonesia, and as early as May 1998 the ADF became aware that it might have to deploy forces to evacuate Australian citizens working in the country.³⁰ By the end of the year the Chief of the Defence Force, Admiral Chris Barrie, RAN, had publicly warned that the ADF needed to be ready for a 'very significant military operation ... much more widespread than anything we might have contemplated 15 to 18 months ago'.³¹ Barrie gained political agreement to raise the readiness and strength of certain ADF elements; and when announcing these measures in March 1999 the Defence Minister, John Moore, included East Timor in the context of regional contingencies that might arise at short notice. Moore noted that a peacekeeping mission was not yet in prospect, but added, 'The Government's responsibility, and our intention is to be in a position to be able to respond effectively to a considerable range of possibilities.'³²

Indonesian authorities were not consulted on developing ADF plans. Discussions between Australia and possible Coalition partners were already underway, however, and at various diplomatic and military levels.³³ An obvious first port of call was New Zealand, where the ANZAC tradition and long-standing cross-Tasman alliance had made the two national defence forces highly interoperable. Australia had yet to seek a definite commitment, but there seemed little doubt that New Zealand supported a substantial and fully cooperative effort. The Chief of the New Zealand Defence Force, Air Marshal Carey Adamson, later acknowledged how his force elements had been chosen in consultation with Admiral Barrie, how they were readily placed under Australian control, and how close cooperation proved crucial to getting the best out of scarce assets.³⁴ Integration with the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) was so close that HMNZS *Canterbury*'s commanding officer, Commander Warren Cummins, RNZN, later described how, in practical terms, his ship 'became an Australian frigate'.³⁵

Given East Timor's geographical proximity to Australia, and the US preoccupation with the military campaign underway in Kosovo in early 1999, ADF planners expected practical support from the northern hemisphere to be far more limited. Ties with the US were nevertheless exploited wherever possible. From an early date the US military became involved in contingency planning, ³⁶ and initial advice from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton, indicated that although the US would not provide 'shooters', assistance with logistics, intelligence and communications was likely. ³⁷ Such assurance, even without political agreement, comforted planners already identifying large gaps in Australian expeditionary capability. By US standards, the ADF maintains only a very small force at high readiness, and the three Australian Services were being thoroughly scoured for both deployable and enabling forces.

Sustainment was the most difficult issue facing ADF planners, and from an RAN perspective the most significant shortfall was in heavy sealift, due in part to delays in modernising two *Newport* class amphibious transports purchased from the US Navy in 1994.³⁸ This left available only the heavy lift ship HMAS *Tobruk*, which was itself long overdue for an extended maintenance period.³⁹ In a significant if hurried addition to the ADF's logistics force structure, in May 1999 the RAN commissioned HMAS *Jervis Bay*, an 86-metre fast wave-piercing catamaran built for commercial ferry service and chartered directly from the builder. Although not acquired with an East Timor operation specifically in mind, the voyage from Darwin to Dili and return was within *Jervis Bay*'s unrefuelled range at 40 knots, and during STABILISE she was to prove her worth time and again.⁴⁰ For a substantial military contingency, however, additional sealift capacity would still be needed and must either come from other Coalition partners or involve further short-notice commercial charters.

As the date of the referendum drew closer, the ADF continued to turn over some of the 'what ifs' attendant upon a Service Assisted Evacuation (SAE) from East Timor, which had by then received the ADF codename, Operation SPITFIRE. Most of the detailed work was done by the newly established Deployable Joint Force Headquarters (DJFHQ), an Army organisation located



HMAS Jervis Bay sails from Dili after delivering more INTERFET troops to East Timor.

in Brisbane that later formed the core of INTERFET's Joint and Combined Task Force Headquarters. DJFHQ's and later INTERFET's commander, the then Major General Peter Cosgrove, has admitted that this SAE work 'was far from the depth of planning desirable for an emerging military contingency'. ⁴¹ But regardless of military prudence, Cosgrove understood that the Australian Government and public, not to mention the international community, would expect any substantial on-the-ground presence in East Timor to be ready and inserted very quickly. Hence DJFHQ simultaneously developed plans for a larger and longer-term peacekeeping-type commitment. In essence, Cosgrove took the high-end evacuation plan and modified it to require the insertion of a light infantry brigade through Dili with the addition of some more robust capabilities and a logistics component.

Australian planners were already working with UN security staff, and assumed that the ADF would lead any deployed multinational force. ⁴² But despite significant international lobbying by Australian and New Zealand diplomats, neither the expected composition and structure of the force, nor the extent and strength of the UN mandate could yet be guaranteed. The level of cooperation to be expected either from Indonesian authorities or, more particularly, the TNI, was also uncertain; at the very best it would be uneven and might actually prove hostile. For the previous quarter century the armed forces had been the primary implementers of Indonesian policy in East Timor. Control was now slipping from their grasp. Australia's leading role in bringing about this change appeared to most Indonesians as a departure from the previous bilateral stance of cooperation and understanding, and contrary to their national pride. ⁴³ Among other complications this meant that any deployed force would need to deal with a major public misinformation campaign generated by the Indonesian media, with flow-on effects into the region.

Australia's diplomatic manoeuvring and operational plans needed to strike a careful balance, preventing offence to Indonesian sensibilities, while adopting a firm posture that would assist the TNI to withdraw in an orderly fashion. An important consideration was to secure a strong regional component to strengthen the creditials of Australia's leadership role, improve its regional image and lend INTERFET credibility as a whole. Indonesia specifically asked for an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) presence in the force, 44 but determining how far these nations might commit posed problems. Joining INTERFET, after all, 'would mean a departure from the principle of mutual non-interference by which ASEAN members had always been bound; politically and psychologically' and would therefore be a considerable step for them to take. 45 As late as 14-18 September, the Australian Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Air Marshal Doug Riding, was still conducting a 'whistlestop tour' through South East Asia, attempting to influence the nature of the contributions and help shape the structure and capabilities of the force. 46 Results were mixed. Thailand announced on 16 September that it would provide INTERFET's deputy commander and ultimately sent some 1600 troops, the largest national contingent after Australia. 47 The Philippines, by contrast, contributed a 'humanitarian relief task force' to INTERFET and balanced this by sending a medical team to Indonesian West Timor. 48

DJFHQ (M), the maritime component of the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, had only been set up at Maritime Headquarters (MHQ) in Sydney in January 1999, and in late August a small planning team was assigned to assist with Operation SPITFIRE. 49 The bulk of the team received orders to move from Sydney to Brisbane on 7 September, just prior to the release of the Operation STABILISE warning order.⁵⁰ Thereafter DJFHQ (M) became the Naval Component Command, 'an "Environmental Sub-Unit Command" under Commander INTERFET', 51 and began planning in earnest for the larger operational commitment. Responsible for the command and control of maritime units assigned to INTERFET, the naval component's immediate task was to establish connectivity with the various ships and headquarters organisations involved in the deployment. It then worked to develop the maritime concept of operations while simultaneously contributing to all parts of the joint and combined planning task. Notwithstanding the ADF's long-standing claim to be a joint organisation, the Army was not used to the other two Services questioning what it was doing and why it was doing it. As such, a first step for the newly appointed Naval Component Commander (NCC), Commodore Jim Stapleton, RAN, was to build trust with Cosgrove, who had not previously worked with either him or the Air Component Commander (ACC), Air Commodore R. McLennan. Stapleton even recalled having to barge into his first joint planning meeting in Brisbane, because he had not been invited to attend. 52

The frenetic pace of early activity contributed to such oversights, but the separate commanders quickly established a good working relationship, as did their key staff officers.⁵³ Fortuitously, several in the naval component had already gained experience with Cosgrove's organisation, having completed the planning, and more importantly the CPX (Command Post Exercise) phase, for Exercise CROCODILE 99 - a major Australian-US joint event that had begun in August, and was aimed primarily at improving interoperability. 54 This exposure proved extremely important to the successful planning and

execution of STABILISE, for as one senior member of the naval staff observed: 'The value of knowing your opposite number, the planning team, planning methods and knowing the requirements/ capabilities of the other services can not be underestimated [sic].'55

NCC's aim throughout STABILISE was to support the land forces in achieving their goals, by inserting the maximum combat forces in the minimum time. To this end, early maritime planning focused on area surveillance, protecting the sea lines of



Commodore Jim Stapleton and his Chief of Staff, Commader Daryl Bates

communication to East Timor, and the provision of appropriate sealift assets to bring in troops and heavy equipment. These contributions could be readily appreciated by all the key stakeholders, but non-naval planners were found to be far less familiar with the importance of the naval role in many other areas, notably broader maritime tactical operations, combat support services and port operations. It took time to establish a better understanding of naval capabilities throughout HO INTERFET, and for early and extensive consultation with the naval component to become a matter of course. The results were evident in some of the initial directives associated with STABILISE. It was noted in Tobruk's post-deployment report, for example, that these instructions were largely land-orientated and did not consider maritime issues.56 The Canadian Joint Task Force (CJTF) Commander in East Timor, Captain (N) Roger Girouard, similarly observed that, in comparison with a Canadian Headquarters, at HO INTERFET the air and naval components were essentially 'add-on elements'.57

Plans were constantly reviewed as the coalition formed and planning teams from the participating nations contributed advice on the assets assigned.⁵⁸ Identified capability shortfalls were passed up the command chain and Admiral Barrie remained in constant touch with his foreign counterparts.⁵⁹ Yet, because the situation on the ground was both in crisis and constantly changing, even determining the overall operational framework for the deployment remained a challenge. Quickly appreciated by all was the absence of host nation support, a situation worsened by the knowledge that what little infrastructure existed in East Timor was rapidly being destroyed by the militias. Nor would any commercial contractors be available in Dili, or indeed any population centre closer than Darwin. This latter aspect posed a significant problem for a moderate-sized defence force like the ADF, which had generally expected to contract out many of its support tasks. The policy push

Nation	Ship	Period allocated to INTERFET
Canada	Protecteur (AOR 509)	23 October 1999 – 23 January 2000
France	Vendémiaire (FFG 734)	20 September – 17 November 1999
	Siroco (LSD 9012)	10 October – 25 November 1999
	Prairial (FFG 731)	16 October – 29 November 1999
	Jacques Cartier (LST 9033)	28 November 1999 – 12 January 2000
Italy	San Giusto (LPD 9894)	26 October 1999 - 15 February 2000
New Zealand	Endeavour (AOR 11)	21 - 24 September 1999
		28 January - 23 February 2000
	Te Kaha (FFH 77)	19 - 26 September 1999
	Canterbury (FFH 421)	26 September – 12 December 1999
Portugal	Vasco da Gama (FFG 330)	16 November 1999 – 22 February 2000
Singapore	Excellence (LST 202)	10 October – 27 November 1999
	Intrepid (LST 203)	10 October - 13 December 1999
	Perseverance (LSL 206)	9 January - 17 February 2000
Thailand	Surin (LST 722)	28 October 1999 – 23 February 2000
United Kingdom	Glasgow (DDG 88)	19 - 29 September 1999
United States	Mobile Bay (CG 53)	20 September – 5 October 1999
	Kilauea (T-AE 26)	20 September – 2 October 1999
	Belleau Wood (LHA 3)	5 - 28 October 1999
	Tippecanoe (T-AO 199)	16 - 24 October 1999
	San Jose (T-AFS 7)	25 - 31 October 1999
	Peleliu (LHA 5)	26 October – 27 November 1999
	Juneau (LPD 10)	28 – 31 January 2000

Table 1. Maritime INTERFET - Coalition Vessels

during the preceding years to outsource non-core functions with the intention of improving the ADF's combat effectiveness, or 'tooth to tail' ratio, also meant that essential trades ranging from cooks to terminal handlers were in very short supply. 60

INTERFET eventually included contingents from 22 nations, of whom 10 provided naval assets, as detailed in tables 1 and 2. In terms of both hulls (22 vs 14) and ship days in theatre (971 vs 784), the RAN would eventually be in the minority, but in the initial phase the naval force was primarily Australian. Ad hoc arrangements regarding command

Ship	Period allocated to INTERFET
Anzac (FFH 150)	19 September – 29 September 1999
Adelaide (FFG 01)	19 September – 19 October 1999
Success (AOR 304)	19 September – 28 October 1999
Darwin (FFG 04)	19 September – 3 November 1999
Australian Clearance Diving Team Four	19 September – 2 December 1999
Hydrographic Office Detached Survey Unit	19 September – 2 December 1999
Tobruk (LSH 50)	20 September – 6 November 1999
Balikpapan (LCH 126)	20 September – 13 November 1999
	8 December 1999 – 15 January 2000
	20 September – 17 November 1999
Brunei (LCH 127)	8 December 1999 - 15 January 2000
	15 - 23 February 2000
	20 September – 14 October 1999
Labuan (LCH 128)	10 November – 8 December 1999
	19 - 23 February 2000
Jervis Bay (AKR 45)	21 September 1999 – 23 February 2000
Tarakan (LCH 129)	30 October – 8 December 1999
	13 January - 16 February 2000
Sydney (FFG 03)	3 November – 19 December 1999
Australian Clearance Diving Team One	2 December 1999 – 17 February 2000
Newcastle (FFG 06)	19 December 1999 – 26 January 2000
Betano (LCH 133)	19 January - 19 February 2000
Melbourne (FFG 05)	20 January - 23 February 2000

Table 2. Maritime INTERFET - Australian Units

and control and other key issues would be required, but operating successfully with this coalescing multinational force was in no way daunting to Stapleton. His appointment as NCC derived from his existing role as Commodore Flotillas (COMFLOT), the immediate commander of the RAN's seagoing fleet. Like most RAN officers he had spent much of his professional career working closely with allied and regional navies, including several years on exchange service. The Australian ships at his disposal had been involved in a succession of bilateral and multilateral exercises, and were already worked up to a high level of efficiency. Several members of the international contingent, notably those from New Zealand and the United Kingdom, had likewise been active in recent combined exercises in Australian waters. Stapleton had therefore just worked with them at sea, was aware of each ship's individual capabilities and knew their commanding officers well.⁶¹

Because Australia had taken the role of lead nation, the ADF's command structure became the Coalition force command concept by default. In national parlance, Major General Cosgrove was the 'supported' commander, leaving the non-deploying Commander Australian Theatre (COMAST), Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar – the ADF's designated operational level commander – as the 'supporting' commander. In consequence, RAN units destined for East Timor might be assigned directly to the Commander INTERFET (Major General Cosgrove as CTF 645) or remain under COMAST's Maritime Commander (Rear Admiral J.R. Lord, RAN, as CTF 627). But in either case, they ended up working for Commodore Stapleton, who remained 'dual-hatted' as both NCC (CTG 645.1) and COMFLOT (CTG 627.1). The command chain worked flexibly enough, but did blur organisational responsibilities for subordinates, and hence could become confusing – especially for units from navies less familiar with RAN operations. It also necessitated the creation of a separate collective signal address, 'MARITIME INTERFET', in order to direct all assigned maritime forces.

Some units from contributing nations were not allocated to either task force, meaning that NCC did not hold their operational control or even tactical control, but other command and control problems came directly from the diverse nature of the participants and the primacy of their own national objectives. Though all contributing nations were ostensibly deploying forces to help the East Timorese people, no member joining the Coalition wished to antagonise Indonesia unnecessarily or put at risk its own bilateral relationship. This ensured Operation STABILISE maintained an overtly and highly-sensitive political nature, and meant that all participants placed varying levels of restrictions on INTERFET tasking while retaining close contact with their own national command structures.

Most problematic for NCC were those units required to pass all tasking requests to home locations via their local national command elements in HQ INTERFET. Delays of

three to four days were common, thereby ruling out the possibility of any short notice assignments. Following a request from Stapleton, most of the contributing nations soon allocated liaison officers to the naval component staff, helping greatly to reduce response times and improve relationships. Indeed, good working relationships became the catalyst for a well-coordinated effort, and from the beginning Stapleton understood that it could never be a matter of laying down the law. Rather he needed to chip away at any resistance by building up liaison. He therefore made a point of establishing contact with units even before they arrived in theatre. As part of the joining procedure he would attempt to determine what capacity they brought, what rules of engagement (ROE) they intended to work under and any particular limitations (political or other) within which they needed to work. ⁶² The naval component staff would then produce an individual concept of operations for that unit.

An area needing especially close attention was the complex legal environment, which magnified the challenges involved in creating a cohesive operating framework.⁶³ Unlike other recent peace operations, notably the Kosovo deployment where the UN Security Council Resolution expressly recognised the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,⁶⁴ the UN had never accepted Indonesian claims to sovereignty over East Timor. In fact, apart from Australia and the US, all other nations contributing to INTERFET had taken a similar stance on East Timor, seeing it as a 'UN-designated non-self-governing territory' under de facto Indonesian control.⁶⁵ This immediately confused such issues as the legal status of East Timorese waters and hence the delineation of the area of operations (AO), and it had a direct impact on the supporting documents Australian authorities were producing on INTERFET's behalf. As the authorised ROE did not provide any detail with regard to rights of navigation, maintaining consistency of approach could be difficult, particularly for those navies not normally used to operating in archipelagic regions. Comprehensive briefing and advice from NCC's legal officer became an essential component of the joining routine for all new arrivals.

An Australian naval task group commander is used to operating with a small staff, but usually with significant backup provided by the ship in which the command team is embarked. Because the RAN did not yet have an appropriate afloat command platform available, ⁶⁶ Stapleton and his staff deployed ashore with the remainder of HQ INTERFET, and in this context had the smallest component command in terms of personnel numbers and the largest in terms of assets. The naval component eventually deployed to East Timor comprised only ten RAN officers and some six other ranks, with various Coalition liaison officers coming and going throughout the operation, as illustrated in figure 1.

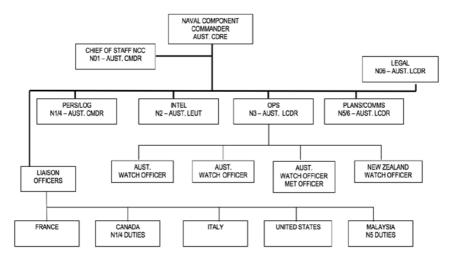


Figure 1. HQ INTERFET Naval Component Command

This small group eventually controlled a force of 35 warships, coordinated the effort of another 8 naval ships that operated purely in support of INTERFET, and assisted with the management of some 35 merchant ships. ⁶⁷ In addition, from the day of insertion NCC became harbourmaster for all East Timorese ports, managing the entry into theatre of all military vehicles, equipment and personnel; the port requirements for commercial shipping and vessels carrying internally displaced persons; and humanitarian assistance.

Control and Insertion

With INTERFET's command having determined that securing Dili would be the key to controlling East Timor, the date for the insertion into the capital, D-day, was set for 20 September. Parallel with the final stages of the STABILISE planning process, naval forces began gathering in Darwin. The growing RAN and RNZN contingent was joined in mid-September by the American Aegis-equipped cruiser USS *Mobile Bay* and the British destroyer HMS *Glasgow*. Already on Far East deployment, *Glasgow* was an obvious selection for the Royal Navy. The US Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC), Admiral Dennis Blair, USN, likewise diverted *Mobile Bay* from participation in Exercise CROCODILE 99, soon after President Bill Clinton confirmed on 9 September that the US would support an Australian-led peacekeeping force. Stapleton began briefing ship command teams on the broad outline of the maritime operational plan on 14 September, although the fluidity of the situation on the ground made matters interesting. Arriving in Darwin on 25 September, the frigate HMNZS *Canterbury* still found the situation somewhat disorganised with operation orders and tasking messages at a minimum. ⁶⁹

Such criticism largely reflects the difficulty of rapidly bringing together an ad hoc coalition with minimal time to conduct negotiations or adopt framework documents. Cosgrove recalled that 'on the day of the operation, only a few of the likely force elements of INTERFET could be described with any accuracy or finality'. 70 Notwithstanding *Mobile Bay*'s presence, and the arrival of Commander US Forces INTERFET (USFI), Brigadier General J.G. Castellaw, USMC, at Darwin on 17 September, 71 even the extent of the American contribution was still being considered and would not be settled for some time. Some of the national participation agreements were reportedly not concluded at all during the period of the INTERFET deployment. 72 Adopting a pragmatic approach was the only solution, with HQ INTERFET generally proceeding on the basis that an agreement was operative even though the contributing state might not yet be a party.

Overall direction of STABILISE took several days to settle down, but the naval organisation at least was already largely in place. The senior Australian unit, HMAS *Adelaide*, had been designated CTG 627.2 and Composite Warfare Commander as early as 10 September. This task organisation was similar to that used in recent exercises and offered no surprises to the other navies then represented. The predominance of RAN and RNZN combat assets at this stage also made ROE for the task group quite manageable. One of NCC's responsibilities had been to ensure that authorised ROE were adequate for maritime purposes and with a cohesive force and robust UN mandate this was not overly difficult.

On 18 September Adelaide sailed her task group, comprising HMA Ships Anzac, Success, Tobruk, Balikpapan, Brunei and Labuan, together with Glasgow and the New Zealand frigate HMNZS Te Kaha, from Darwin for the AO. The departure of so many ships received extensive media coverage, and effectively put to rest any continuing regional speculation surrounding the insertion of INTERFET. Once clear of the harbour the task group dispersed into distinct elements based on functional tasking, with escorts covering the logistic and amphibious units. Even as these units sailed, other INTERFET naval assets, including Mobile Bay, the small New Zealand tanker HMNZS Endeavour, the French frigate FS Vendémiaire and Australian frigate HMAS Darwin, were already at sea just outside East Timorese waters.

In late August the Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral Lord, had recalled *Darwin* from a South-East Asian deployment and tasked her with participation in Operation SPITFIRE. Arriving in the waters off south-eastern East Timor on 6 September, the frigate became the first Coalition unit on station, and for the next 12 days patrolled a 60 x 20 nautical mile box near the Wetar Strait. Initially positioned to provide search and rescue, flight deck and basic medical support for Army helicopters transiting from Australia, *Darwin* was well placed to begin building and maintaining a comprehensive surveillance picture. Indonesian military assets showed interest and pleasantries were exchanged, but by maintaining her station outside territorial waters the frigate was under no obligation to move. *Darwin* was also well positioned to escort the fast transport *Jervis Bay*, which on three occasions sailed from Darwin with a ground security force embarked ready to assist with the handling of evacuees. In the event, none of these additional support measures was needed, and Australian and New Zealand air force aircraft extracted safely almost 2500 authorised personnel between 6 and 14 September.

Following the official announcement of INTERFET, TNI movements around East Timor increased markedly and interaction with Coalition units became less friendly. In addition to the thousands of Indonesian troops maintained ashore, military aircraft were active from airfields in West Timor, while at least two Type 209 submarines, together with several logistic ships and surface combatants, operated off the coast. Early identification of all contacts was an essential precaution, as the TNI seemed determined to make its presence felt. Some Indonesian warships, recalled Commander Cummins, 'were more aggressive in their actions than others, they were all very quiet, they wouldn't talk and they wouldn't radiate and the first indication was generally a visual bearing and some of them got quite close especially at night'.⁷⁷ Although mainstream thought within the TNI understood that mischance must be avoided, the Indonesian forces possessed some members 'who, for other reasons, were not as worried about that, and some whose sense of outrage clouded their judgment'.⁷⁸ Without any means to identify these

'rogue elements', Coalition commanders had to consider all Indonesian military assets a potential threat until they retired from the area. At the same time, INTERFET aimed to avoid confrontation. Following advice to either maintain the status quo or just keep things calm, *Darwin* maintained her patrol in the lead up to D-day, moving into the outer areas of her box to avoid misunderstandings as necessary, but remaining able to maintain a comprehensive maritime picture.

As in most littoral operations, the greatest threat to ships came from unalerted air contacts appearing quickly from off the coast. Over rugged terrain a ship's radar performance might be compromised, and it was now that the unique capabilities brought by individual Coalition members could be readily appreciated. *Mobile Bay* entered the AO as the most sophisticated combatant available to INTERFET. Operational control of the cruiser remained firmly in US Navy hands, but she readily provided extensive support to the maritime task group in a variety of intelligence gathering and surveillance roles. Throughout her time in theatre, *Mobile Bay* remained Air Warfare Commander and her weapons, sensors and battle management systems meant that the force could operate with a high degree of confidence, even without the continuous presence of friendly fighter aircraft.⁷⁹

Mobile Bay did not operate alone, and during the initial insertion all Coalition surface combatants and maritime patrol aircraft were effectively integrated and able to support an area-wide surveillance picture through standard LOCATOR reports and data transfer via Link 11. The diverse array of organic sensors these units operated, and equally important, their ability to display, manipulate and communicate the collected information.



HMAS Success (centre) replenishes the ammunition ship USNS Kilauea and cruiser USS Mobile Bay.

provided INTERFET commanders with the tools to make educated decisions. There were problems, for example, in marrying the maritime surveillance picture with that on land, but the capability to detect and track multiple contacts in several dimensions, and for as long as was needed, ensured that INTERFET possessed a recognised picture extending out to at least 400 miles from Dili. With this level of battlespace surveillance the likelihood of the force being taken by surprise was greatly minimised, if not completely removed.

East Timor's mountainous geography also hampered high frequency Link operations, but the linked picture could be relayed back to mainland Australia via the OTCIXS (Officer in Tactical Command Information Exchange Subsystem) network to the Joint Intelligence Centre at HQ Australian Theatre in Sydney. Hence, when on 19 September Cosgrove flew into Dili for discussions with the senior TNI officer in East Timor, Major General Kiki Syahnakri, he arrived with a very good understanding of the tactical situation. Concerned about the time it might take to build up INTERFET combat power ashore, Cosgrove made clear his requirements for airfield and port use and deployment areas. Indonesian authorities seemed taken aback by the size and rapidity of the intended deployment, but as a result of these discussions Cosgrove was able to make his insertion plan a little less confrontational, and delaying slightly the deployment of the Australian Army's Black Hawk helicopters.⁸⁰

The first few days of the operation nonetheless reflected the build-up of tension. The situation ashore remained highly charged, and Cosgrove placed great reliance on an assortment of Coalition warfighting capabilities. Adopting what he has described as 'a Rooseveltian approach' ('speak softly and carry a big stick'), Cosgrove has acknowledged the advantage INTERFET gained from 'the persuasive, intimidatory or deterrent nature of major warships'.⁸¹ The Operation STABILISE execution order went out late on 19 September, and the following dawn the residents of Dili awoke to find the destroyer *Glasgow*, frigates *Anzac* and *Darwin*, and the tanker *Success* just off the harbour entrance. *Darwin* detached to patrol the western approaches while *Anzac*, assuming the role of Dili Guardship, provided close escort protection for *Success*. An hour later the first of 15 Coalition C-130 transport aircraft allocated for the initial insertion of land forces arrived at Dili airport.⁸² Small parties of INTERFET special forces first secured the airport then began moving into the devastated and still burning town. Later in the day General Cosgrove and his command element arrived to set up HQ INTERFET, although this was not fully established until 25 September.

On 21 September, watched closely by the crews of a number of Indonesian naval vessels at anchor and alongside, the Coalition amphibious group arrived at Dili to begin landing INTERFET's heavy equipment. Special forces had already secured the wharf and, while RAN clearance divers worked quickly to remove a wreck placed by the Indonesians at the bottom of the berth, a Hydrographic Office Detached Survey Unit (HODSU) conducted a rudimentary survey of the port approaches to confirm navigational safety.⁸³ Unloading began at dawn; by sunset the entire port was open and a beach landing site had been cleared and was operating. That same day *Jervis Bay* completed her first ferry run from Darwin to Dili to add bulk to the troop build-up.⁸⁴ With more than 3000 INTERFET troops and their equipment landed by air and sea within the first 48 hours, the initial insertion was robust, rapid and clearly professional, helping the Coalition force to appear larger than it actually was. But it was at Dili port, rather than at the more remote airfield, that

this demonstration of efficient and determined operations made the greatest impression. Thousands of civilian and military onlookers were left in no doubt either about INTERFET's intentions or the fact that TNI was no longer in control.⁸⁵

The first amphibious lodgment activities added emphasis to the necessity of protection operations. The movements of high interest Indonesian contacts, such as the two submarines, were continuously observed, and surveillance responsibilities handed over between the Coalition's naval units.⁸⁶ There was no illumination by fire control radars, which might easily have aggravated the situation, but this seamless monitoring left no room for waywardness. During the first few days *Anzac*, *Glasgow*



The Hydrographic Detached Survey Unit surveys the approaches to Dili.

and *Darwin* received additional support from *Adelaide, Te Kaha* and *Mobile Bay,* which, when not providing close escort to and from Darwin, patrolled the eastern and western approaches to Dili. The impact these large, grey and obviously well-armed assets had on the many observers ashore should not be underestimated. Purely through presence INTERFET's maritime assets had amply demonstrated both international resolve and the Coalition's ability to defend itself at its most vulnerable time. The Canadian CJTF Commander put it succinctly:

... an armada is still an impressive and intimidating sight. The Coalition's massed tonnage and naval might in the approaches to Dili helped convince the TNI and the Government of Indonesia that the international community had in fact ranged itself in full support of an independent East Timor, in a way that Coalition forces ashore could not. Sea power as a diplomatic force is alive and well.⁸⁷

Other Coalition commanders went further. Air Marshal Adamson, for one, concluded that the reason the Indonesian military threat 'didn't become anything more than just a threat ... was because of the strong and vigorous naval presence we had right from the beginning'. 88 Most important, this deterrent effect remained extant, irrespective of an individual Coalition unit's national ROE. Any outside observer could see that INTERFET had brought along the capability to provide an overwhelming response to a threatening action. This display was a deterrence to potential belligerents, as there was no way to determine what they might get away with. Militia provocations and challenges to the Coalition's authority did

take place ashore, but they were invariably low-level, cautious and unorganised, doing nothing to prevent INTERFET from gaining and maintaining the initiative.

In effect, the presence of maritime forces provided INTERFET with a multidimensional protective umbrella, or 'ring of steel' as Commander Cummins described it. 89 That screen limited the possibility of external interference and directly enabled land force commanders to concentrate on the already complex mission at hand. Equally significant, high-end combat capabilities combined with the inherent mobility of maritime forces made the Coalition presence seem ubiquitous. Moreover, should the situation ashore become untenable, the naval component would be the only credible basis for an emergency extraction plan. Together these factors were tremendous confidence builders for INTERFET forces as a whole, and NCC ensured they were maintained for as long as was needed.



HMAS Success, HMAS Adelaide and FS Vendémiaire sit close off Dili Harbour.

Implicit in all this maritime activity was the requirement for sustained high-level interoperability. As one New Zealand academic study concluded, 'INTERFET functioned in the crucial first week because the Australian armed forces could interoperate with diverse contingents drawn from Britain, France, New Zealand and the United States.'90 In the maritime environment this was best evidenced in the vital role of Dili Guardship. The Guardship's responsibilities included the allocation of force protection for sealift and sustainment assets, developing and maintaining the recognised maritime and air picture, and acting as local warfare commander. During the first critical week the role routinely passed between the different combatant units of the RAN, Royal Navy and US Navy.⁹¹ Confidence in the easy transfer of such responsibilities can only be obtained from shared or compatible operational doctrine and close familiarity among units. As highlighted by Captain James Goldrick, RAN, then Director of the Sea Power Centre – Australia, frequent, challenging and realistic 'bi-lateral and multilateral exercises pay huge dividends in this regard', allowing mutual experience to easily translate into the operational sphere.⁹²

Interoperability also provides context for understanding the connectivity provided to information and intelligence sources. Here the C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence) support provided by US forces played a pivotal role, with the US CINCPAC unit, MSO-126, arriving at Darwin with 18 personnel on 19 September.93 A US Pacific Command fleet systems support asset designed for rapid deployment to provide Defense Information Systems Network (DISN) services for early entry forces, the MSQ thereafter 'provided DSN [Defense System Network], NIPRNET [Non-Secure Internet Protocol Router Network], SIPRNET [Secret Internet Protocol Router Network], video, GCCS [Global Command and Control System], and AUTODIN [Automatic Digital Network] messaging'. 94 For the Australian NCC, the US-sponsored GCCS, 95 a successor to the Joint Operation Tactical System, proved to be an invaluable command analysis tool and secondary communications system. Through GCCS, the naval component had both effective situational awareness and a ship-shore communications system working before midnight on D-day – a remarkable achievement. Indeed, because most other systems ashore took time to establish, ship systems at first provided the backbone of Coalition communications and, because he had ready access, NCC initially had a far better intelligence picture than anyone else in HO INTERFET. 96 In a practical sense this meant that workarounds, such as Stapleton handcarrying information to Cosgrove ashore, were sometimes necessary.

The safe insertion of INTERFET had been achieved, but there remained much to accomplish. Even as INTERFET deployed, those opposed to East Timorese independence completed the final acts of their 'scorched earth' policy, and few buildings in Dili remained habitable. On 28 September a Canadian Strategic Reconnaissance Team arrived and provided a sobering description of the situation:

Flying into Dili, a coastal town ringed by substantial hills, fires were still evident and a smoke haze was everywhere. The city was partially alight, while half remained occupied by the TNI. At the west end, refugees were crowded into standing room only in an old warehouse, unsure of whether to fear a resurgence of TNI/militia outrage or believe the disinformation about the 'murdering INTERFET killers and rapists'. Troops and trucks and firepower were everywhere, but given that the heights were not yet secured, the vulnerability of INTERFET's toehold in East Timor was also evident. Militia soldiers were known to be present, although the town remained largely deserted. The militia's bounty on the INTERFET leadership demanded robust personal security. The TNI remained in large numbers, notionally restricted to the barracks, but they and the gunboats and submarines in the area made it clear that Indonesia was still interested in what was going on and that a turn for the worst could get ugly very fast.⁹⁷

While the TNI remained in country in strength, INTERFET would find it difficult to concentrate on the militia, but working to the Coalition's advantage was Australia's previous investment in its military relationship with Indonesia. Built up through many years of close professional contact, TNI's leadership had a clear understanding of the ADF's competence, effectiveness and determination. There was enough mutual respect, and indeed friendship at senior levels, to allow each side to understand one another's way of thought and how each would respond. This was nowhere more apparent than in the frank discussions that took place between Rear Admiral Lord and his Indonesian counterpart, Commander Western Fleet, concerning the continued presence of Indonesian surface and sub-surface units in the vicinity of East Timor. 98 By keeping the TNI fully briefed on the Coalition's intentions and registering concerns directly with the appropriate Indonesian commander, INTEFET ensured that there was 'a predisposition to talk through issues rather than shoot through them' and this dialogue continued through to the end of the operation. 99 On 24 September Indonesia lifted martial law and began their military pullout from East Timor. By 31 October, the withdrawal had effectively been completed.



Australian soldiers wave goodbye to Indonesian troops from the port of Dili after security arrangements were handed over to INTERFET, 29 September 1999.

Consolidation and Sustainment

General Cosgrove's initial focus on the insertion of the Coalition's combat forces soon gave way to the consolidation phase of Operation STABILISE, aimed at allowing UN humanitarian and nation-building operations to continue, and INTERFET support to buildup. At the outset Cosgrove had ordered that INTERFET elements would not attempt to live off the local economy, therefore all supplies had to be brought in. Often there were up to 18 commercial ships in Dili Harbour and two to three shipping movements a day. 'An important reminder,' as one assessment noted, 'that effective sea lift in strategic terms rests even more upon the ability to access commercial tonnage than it does upon military vessels.' Protection of sea lines of communication thus remained an important maritime task throughout the operation, and was achieved mainly through constant monitoring and patrols. A Coalition warship, for example, would maintain visibility on each merchant ship from the time it entered the AO until it anchored, offering chartered shipping a welcome measure of reassurance.

The absence of local infrastructure remained a significant challenge, and the inability of commercial shipping to load and unload without access to suitable wharfage and specialised handling equipment proved a severe constraint. In fact, the inadequacies of the port facilities, lack of lay-down space and movements of equipment all conspired to slow down, and sometimes

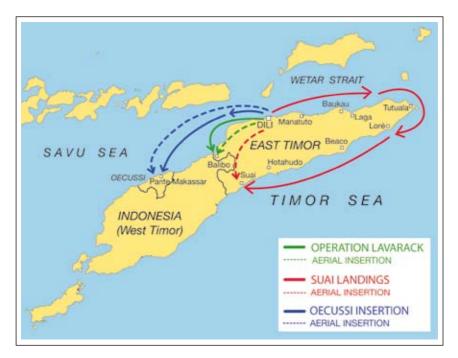


A chartered merchant ship unloading Army vehicles at Dili.

halt, the flow of supplies into the theatre. ¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the Dili airfield had similar difficulties and, unlike the port, had to shut down at night. ¹⁰² Logisticians well understood that sealift was far more efficient and effective for long-term force sustainment and the final balance was clear. The 11 nations contributing to the Coalition Airlift Wing flew 3400 sorties, carried 9500 tonnes of freight and transported more than 30,000 passengers, ¹⁰³ yet more than 91 per cent of cargo and most of the INTERFET personnel delivered to East Timor still came by sea. ¹⁰⁴

Hence, even as the intensity of the maritime tactical situation decreased, the transport and amphibious capability provided by maritime forces became more important. Throughout the operation's first month, thousands of troops continued to pour into Dili as did heavy

equipment, fuel and supplies. Once INTERFET had established its authority in the capital and its surrounds, Coalition ground forces moved out to take control elsewhere, Cosgrove labelling this an 'oil spot concept'. ¹⁰⁵ In addition to occupying the smaller inland towns the operational approach required three major troop lodgments to be mounted from Dili. The first two aimed to prevent the militias using Indonesian West Timor as a safe base from which to foray into East Timor. Operation LAVARACK, which began on 1 October, secured the north-western half of the inter-Timor border. It was followed five days later by a major landing at Suai on the south coast, Operation STRAND, which removed the militia presence in the south-west border region. The last major lodgment, Operation RESPITE, which began on 22 October, aimed to relieve the geographically isolated Oecussi Enclave – a district on the north-west coast separated from the rest of East Timor by some 80 kilometres of Indonesian territory, and overflowing with refugees. ¹⁰⁶



Throughout these three operations, Coalition maritime capabilities and, above all, amphibious units proved essential to any realistic efforts to make land forces mobile over long distances. Although the initial insertion might be by troop-carrying helicopter, heavy equipment invariably came over the shore, as did follow-on logistic support. ¹⁰⁷ After

the initial Suai landing Tobruk conducted four return trips to Darwin, during which she transported almost 642 soldiers and 2000 tonnes of cargo. Each of these 'Military Sealift/ Amphibious lodgments' were, as *Tobruk* noted in a post-operational narrative, 'definitely an Allied affair: Tobruk transported cargo and troops from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland, while being escorted by or working in concert with Australian, Canadian, French, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States warships and aircraft'. 108



The INTERFET force hits the beach at Suai, in the south-west corner of East Timor. HMA Ships Labuan, Brunei and Balikpapan provided the the force with capability to make a beach landing to off-load its vehicles. HMAS Tobruk moved hundreds of troops from Dili to set up a permanent security presence in the border town.

Lodgment was not without difficulties, particularly at Suai where the majority of Canadian and New Zealand equipment was found to be containerised; 'irrelevant', as the Canadian CJTF noted, 'in a third-world country with no handling capacity'. 109 The initial solution entailed mid-stream off-loading by craning the containers from *Tobruk* into a heavy landing craft for subsequent pick-up by a side-loading truck. Although just workable in benign sea states, the procedure was neither efficient nor particularly safe. Far preferable was the use of heavy lift helicopters to pick up containers directly from Tobruk's deck, but these aircraft were a rarity among the Coalition, particularly at sea. Indeed, only US forces possessed the necessary rotary wing assets. On 29 September, US Secretary of Defense William Cohen advised Australian authorities that the amphibious assault ship USS *Belleau Wood* would provide heavy lift capabilities with its US Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters. ¹¹⁰ Without these aircraft the unloading operation might take two to three days; with their assistance it could be achieved in less than seven hours. ¹¹¹

Belleau Wood, complete with a contingent of marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived in the AO on 5 October and was relieved by her sister ship USS *Peleliu*, with a contingent of the 11th MEU on 26 October. Although US policy aimed to minimise its footprint ashore, participation by these large and highly capable units offered a significant show of force at a critical time. They not only affirmed the unmistakable US backing as INTERFET established control of the border with West Timor, but also provided real depth of capability to the multinational forces committed. At least one analyst has argued that without these vessels, the speed with which INTERFET expanded its authority would have been significantly retarded. Although the longer-term contribution made by RAN assets cannot be overlooked, without doubt the continuing US involvement offered unmatched political leverage, and stands as a useful example of naval presence used for demonstrative rather than purely for operational reasons.

Meanwhile, for the Coalition's surface combatants and their organic rotary wing aircraft, the maintenance of a 'presence factor' also continued as a major consideration in planning; Cosgrove using these units as symbols of his seriousness and intent up until INTERFET's last day in theatre. 114 From the time of an individual troop insertion until final withdrawal, a frigate would remain on patrol within sight of the shore as Local Area Warfare Commander. Providing what was termed 'constructive reinforcement', the ship offered cover as necessary, together with health support services, aeromedical evacuation, air mobility operations and lilypad and refuelling support for army and air force helicopters. 115 Sustained presence was particularly important during the initial surveillance and intelligence gathering missions ashore; on at least one occasion a special forces patrol got in over its head and required extraction. 116

Direct fire support was never required from any of the offshore guardships, but remained readily available throughout the operation. Likewise, tThe focus on the safe delivery of logistic supplies to the forces ashore never lessened. Multi-sensor surveillance also remained crucial, but even low technology capabilities proved useful, since deep water existed quite close to the shore and ships were often used to provide additional visual surveillance of the surrounding coastal area. One of the later arriving warships, HMAS *Sydney*, reported that her 'highly visible presence' as Oecussi Guardship in November-December 1999 'provided the local population, Land Component personnel and ship's

Humanitarian Assistance teams great reassurance. In addition it provided a strong deterrent to any militia who may have been observing INTERFET activity from the hills surrounding Oecussi.'118

Already assuming equal importance for the forces afloat was the provision of 'morale support' or hotel services. As most of the soldiers initially landed were combat troops they had little capacity for other tasks. To many Army commanders it came as a revelation that warships could offer a welcome and needed respite from the hot, dry and dusty living conditions their personnel experienced ashore. ¹¹⁹ *Tobruk*, for example, when either alongside or at anchor, 'offered recuperation services of showers, laundry facilities, fresh meals, temporary air conditioned comfort, email and Interflora facilities'. ¹²⁰ Her arrival was often described as a godsend by the forces ashore and during her two month deployment more than 1800 troops used her onboard services, while she continuously sent ashore snack and BBQ packs and fresh provisions.

By the end of October 1999, more than 10,000 Coalition personnel had been deployed to the AO, and in practical terms they had returned peace and stability to some 80 per cent of East Timor. UNSC Resolution 1264 had agreed that INTERFET should be replaced as soon as possible by a UN peacekeeping operation and invited the Secretary-General to plan and prepare for such a deployment. The combination of INTERFET's rapid progress and the decision, on 19 October, of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia to recognise East Timor's independence allowed for the establishment of the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) on 25 October. UNSC Resolution 1272 (1999) endowed UNTAET with 'overall responsibility for the administration of East Timor' and empowered it 'to exercise all legislative and executive authority including the administration of justice'. ¹²¹ INTERFET's transition to UNTAET did not begin for another three months, however, with the final transfer of responsibilities taking place on 23 February 2000. ¹²² Thereafter Coalition forces either moved to the UNTAET command structure or redeployed to home locations.

In the meantime, with the level of maritime warfare tasks relatively low, the majority of the naval component's effort went towards logistic sustainment of the land forces, together with engineering repair services and mobility tasks around East Timor. To simplify reporting and tasking, the naval component had by this stage been functionally sub-divided into five broad elements: Alpha – Dili Guardship; Bravo – Amphibious and Afloat Support; Charlie – Escort Duties and Suai Guardship; Delta – Oecussi Guardship; and Echo – Rest and Recreation visits to Darwin. 124 In effect, within the AO a three layered approach existed:

In the inner harbour and local coastal area there were very small amphibious ships that the Australians have, the LCHs. There were a number of other nations who brought in similar size ships and so they were providing the local coastal and small port re-supply around the coast. Then you had the middle layer of the large amphibious ships that were doing the big haulage backwards and forwards from Darwin. Everything worked in and out of Darwin. There was a steady stream of ships coming in and out around the coast and they were providing the bulk stores which, were then off-loaded onto the smaller stuff or ashore. Then in the outer perimeter you had the warships that were providing the Dili guardship for escorts and that type of stuff and the command and control facilities as well. 125

The approach of the wet season in November threatened to further complicate movement matters in the theatre. The south coast of Timor experiences an average of three

cyclones per year, and even without these the heavy monsoonal rains make the few East Timorese roads and airfields unuseable. 126 This left seaborne resupply to regional centres as the only viable solution, but it might be better described, to paraphrase recent US Navy 'Sea Power 21' concept developments, as 'inadvertent sea basing'. 127 Cosgrove was typically straightforward about the 'crucial nature' of this relationship:

We surrounded East Timor with floating warehouses, gas stations, air ports and docks and motels. It would have been a real struggle to maintain tempo and achieve sustainment ashore, without our afloat logistic capability.¹²⁸

Dependence on offshore support was nowhere more apparent than in the provision of fuel. Although there was some fuel ashore, it belonged to the Indonesians and neither the INTERFET



An Army marshaller guides a Sea King delivering a collapsible fuel drum to a dump at Komoro airfield, Dili. The Sea Kings played a vital role in the operation by assisting in the delivery of troops, fuel and supplies to INTERFET positions around East Timor.

command nor the UN were willing to touch it. Thus, for the first three months of the operation naval units were the only source of the diesel (F76) and aviation (F44) fuel, which the Coalition consumed at some 30,000 litres a day. 129 The lack of facilities to transfer fuel ashore was a particular weakness, and stocks from the available naval tanker were initially transferred to a dump ashore using collapsible fuel drums underslung from an RAN Sea King helicopter. Fuel trucks were brought into the theatre only in mid-October and these were then brought to the tanker using a landing craft. Neither of these techniques were overly efficient, later being described as 'akin to filling tanks by buckets'. 130 Moreover, as the force dispersed, the need for fuel broadened geographically, and so the complexity of the distribution of fuel increased and reliance on the available tanker escalated. The maintenance of adequate fuel stocks required close liaison among the environmental component commands, offering another insight into the critical importance of the wider Coalition contribution.

Until mid-October, *Success* and *Endeavour* were the only tankers available to INTERFET and with *Success* required to remain in the AO to provide fuel ashore, *Endeavour* maintained a shuttle service. A typical return run from either Singapore or Darwin saw the New Zealand tanker deliver 150 tonnes of aviation fuel and 2200 tonnes of diesel to INTERFET and then conduct replenishments of fuel and provisions with Coalition surface combatants. ¹³¹ Just before departing for home on 20 October, *Endeavour* topped up the tanks of the incoming Canadian replenishment ship, HMCS *Protecteur*.

In welcoming *Protecteur*, Rear Admiral Lord highlighted traditional Commonwealth linkages:

Your arrival brings a very welcome boost to the INTERFET afloat support forces and adds another very important element to the international communities [sic] response to East Timor. The long and successful association between our two navies will ensure your rapid integration with the INTERFET maritime forces.¹³²

Success was in need of a maintenance period, however, and about to follow *Endeavour* out of the AO. What Lord had not highlighted was that *Protecteur* would soon become the naval component's only tanker and thus a potential single point of failure for the entire operation. ¹³³ Particularly noteworthy in this context, is that the early Canadian vision for *Protecteur*'s employment was based not on maritime replenishment, but on her sister ship HMCS *Preserver*'s experience in Somalia in 1993, and subsequent missions in Florida and the Bahamas. *Protecteur* was to be 'relatively Dili-centric, providing a medical team ashore, humanitarian aid and to serve as a floating command post for the Canadian Joint Task Force Commander'. ¹³⁴

That *Protecteur* could easily absorb such a significant role change reinforced Captain Girouard's assessment that she 'was a viable and flexible platform for the mission envisaged'. During her time in the AO she also assumed the duties of Task Group Logistic Commander, responsible for coordinating the ordering of supplies and their provision for the whole of the naval task force. Only after an element of operational routine had set in did humanitarian projects assume a greater level of priority. Nevertheless, from the earliest days of STABILISE, skilled naval specialists had gone ashore as work parties to clean and repair buildings, construct ablution facilities, undertake plumbing and electrical services, and assist terminal handlers with the off-loading of military cargo. HQ INTERFET and its barracks were only rendered habitable through the efforts of naval shore parties.

As INTERFET facilities ashore improved, the focus of these parties changed to assist with rebuilding East Timor's civilian infrastructure. A number of non-government organisations had arrived in INTERFET's wake, but none had the resources or people to achieve much more than food distribution until after December 1999. Because the visibility of humanitarian assistance operations compared to other activities was disproportionately high in the eyes of higher authorities and the media, NCC ensured that each Coalition naval unit had the opportunity to put such parties ashore. By the end of the operation these ships had provided more than 20,000 personnel-hours of humanitarian assistance, saving lives and providing shelter to many thousands of East Timorese.



Personnel from all Coalition navies were involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the East Timorese people.

Coalition Observations

INTERFET was a strong Coalition and the command system, although set up hurriedly, worked well; however, several issues deserve further comment. First is the importance of nurturing the Coalition itself. The ad hoc nature of the organisational structure made for a complicated operational environment, not made any easier for other national components by the fact that, in the first instance, HQ INTERFET had an almost completely Australian staff. Clearly the personality and political skills of the force commander were crucial. ¹³⁹ Bringing a welcome breath of cultural reality to purely technological considerations of interoperability, General Cosgrove has remarked how managing the relationships among the different Coalition partners, not only took up a great part of his day, but 'were absolutely key to success':

The robust and rough and ready lip service we pay to the interoperability issues between proudly different, but vastly similar, national and military cultures such as those of the USA and Australia does not ring true when the potential combined force has a different make-up. Platitudes such as 'fish or cut bait' or 'if it's too



INTERFET Commander Major General Peter Cosgrove disembarks from a Singaporean landing craft at Dili after visiting the captain of RSS Excellence.

hot in the kitchen', etc, don't mean much if the Coalition won't form, or if having formed, won't work. We have all been working on these relationship issues for decades, so I'm not saying we're starting from scratch but if the requirement is for true burden sharing then part of the burden is a sensitivity to accompany our clear and fierce mission focus.¹⁴⁰

Commodore Stapleton and his successor as NCC, Commodore Brian Robertson, RAN, ¹⁴¹ have similarly observed that Coalition management was their biggest issue, and during their time in theatre took great care to foster their areas of the relationship matrix. ¹⁴² Convoluted national command and control systems and limitations on tactical control could make flexible tasking difficult, but to avoid any impression that his was a purely Australian headquarters, Stapleton had made liaison officers an integral component from an early stage. These officers in turn formed a key part of the individual network of connectivity maintained by each national element, and proved vital to NCC when negotiating workarounds. It must be noted, however, that the presence of so many nationalities also caused security problems. The importance of GCCS during INTERFET's insertion has been mentioned, but its continued use became impossible once officers from other Coalition nations joined the NCC staff full-time. In effect, because he could not have ashore all the communications gear he needed, NCC had to 'dumb down' as INTERFET became more multinational. Fortunately, he could 'smart up' again simply by going back onboard an RAN ship.

Communications nevertheless had to be maintained across the force, and here Coalition building from a naval perspective had a distinct advantage. In an interview published in the December 1999 edition of the US Naval Institute's *Proceedings*, the Australian Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral David Shackleton, RAN, elaborated on some of East Timor's early lessons. These, he noted were 'typical': 'navies can meet almost anywhere. You can talk on a radio and you can set up an arrangement.' 'Navies,' he continued, 'are very good at forming and doing business in a Coalition way that I think armies and air forces find difficult.' ¹⁴³ The INTERFET experience reinforced the point that language problems tend not to be significant at sea and that NCC could construct a force that communicated because its naval elements had common operating procedures. If there was ever any doubt, then the message could always be sent in plain English, albeit with increased possibility of compromise.

At the same time operating with a disparate force that included both high and low capability navies meant that there were multiple levels of interoperability to be considered. The Australian Navy, as Shackleton also noted, has 'to be interoperable with just about

everybody'. 144 In practice, NCC had to be able to communicate both up and down. Yet, even for the RAN and US Navy, despite years of working together and operating compatible equipment, high-level interoperability did not just happen. One might have expected cryptographic commonality to be a C4I staple, but even maintaining this aspect was still found to require an inordinate amount of time and effort. 145 Only the willingness of individual units to remain flexible and adapt to changing circumstances brought success. Because the naval component operated as an 'aligned' rather than as an 'integrated force', the same need for individual flexibility also became necessary when determining relationships between ships. Darwin's post-deployment report notes that any problems in this regard 'were quite manageable', but adds that this was '... due to the dedication of involved personnel to get the job done'. 146

Notwithstanding such efforts, each nation, and indeed each ship, presented different challenges. The Royal Thai Navy's logistic ship Surin, to take one example, arrived in a poor material state, and therefore required a long maintenance period in Darwin before she could be employed operationally. Meanwhile some vessels, or at least their commanders, appeared to prefer port visits to NCC's operational tasking, and long or unpredictable periods of 'national tasking' often severely limited their utility. 147 Limiting the usefulness of others were the national restrictions imposed relating to the carriage of 'military' materiel as opposed to 'humanitarian' stores and equipment. The French Government, for instance, was one of the first to offer naval units to the nascent Coalition, but had decided that 'its response would be humanitarian' and therefore only assets to support such efforts would be deployed. 148 These sorts of national constraints meant that capabilities brought

to, or weighting within, particular task elements were sometimes less than desired and at other times disproportionately heavy. Thus, the presence of too many surface combatants in lieu of logistic support units in the operation's latter phases, when transport resources were stretched to the limit, 149 on occasion reduced NCC's ability to relieve assigned units and provide redundancy.



Warships from Italy, Thailand, Portugal and Australia crowd the wharf at Darwin.

Differences in approach among individual units became a critical consideration in this context. NCC experienced no problems tasking the New Caledonia-based landing ship, FS *Jacques Cartier*. By contrast her predecessor, the larger FS *Siroco*, had arrived directly from European waters with significantly different procedures. Apparently unaware that Darwin was a commercial and not a naval port, *Siroco* initially claimed she could not accept a lower priority for loading, and would therefore sail for Dili with significantly less cargo than planned. As the ADF had no influence over routine commercial shipping and NCC had only allowed *Tobruk* to depart the AO after the French had formally signed up to the task, there was no slack to play with. Only by sending the French national commander from Dili to Darwin was the problem eventually resolved. Not surprisingly, NCC noted in a brief to the Australian Maritime Commander:

Owing to the political complexities and diverse nature of the forces involved, tasks which would normally be conducted without detailed planning or instructions require high levels of liaison and monitoring.¹⁵⁰

Finally mention must be made of ROE, which within an ad hoc multinational operation are generally likely to be more contentious than in a formalised alliance such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). ¹⁵¹ From the beginning of Operation STABILISE all commanders recognised that national policies might not always coincide. Even the deployed US forces had severe limitations imposed on the equipment they could use, where they could (and more importantly could not) go and what they could do. ¹⁵² All units felt able to decline tasking if it was perceived to be in conflict with national foreign policy or ROE. At the same time it became very obvious to NCC that some nations were not as advanced on this issue as others, and had yet to develop a mature ROE construct. If time allowed, the matter in dispute would be referred to the national command element in HQ INTERFET for resolution, and if still not resolved would then be passed to national headquarters at home.

Nevertheless, the risks to coordination, timing and readiness within the force were real, and once more a pragmatic approach proved essential. The answer was always to match forces with activity, allowing INTERFET needs to be satisfied without compromising unique national interests. The Singaporeans, for example, were exceptionally keen to assist with Coalition objectives. At the same time, as a member of ASEAN, they were extremely sensitive to regional perceptions, and did not wish to appear as a big international player. The three Singaporean Navy landing ships were therefore given the role of providing a continuous ferry service from Darwin to Dili. Although relatively low-key, they worked in tandem with other Coalition sealift assets, and their contribution remained instrumental in

establishing the land component of INTERFET ashore. Remarking on 'the ease with which the Singaporean Navy slotted into the Coalition, particularly the way in which they related to the RAN', Commodore Robertson gave most credit to the RAN's long-running program of regional engagement. ¹⁵³ In this sense Australia was able to bring a very valuable partner into the Coalition in a manner that might not have been so easy had another nation with global responsibilities, and the associated negative undertones, provided the lead.

The main lesson here is that ships are mobile and self-contained, and hence units without appropriate ROE, capabilities or skill sets can to some extent be isolated. This has the potential to reduce the commander's need to provide a level of supervision that might drag away more capable assets from where they are needed; a particular concern when assets are in short supply. Even ashore, Cosgrove deliberately divided East Timor into more and less difficult areas and ensured that the tough areas, such as those on the borders, were only handled by those forces with the requisite skills and experience for 'peace-making' rather than 'peacekeeping'. 154 It must be kept in mind, however, that this was only achievable because the higher-level threat failed to materialise. As one of the first detailed studies of the operation pointed out:

A truly multinational and ad hoc peace-enforcement force with a diverse membership is workable only if the mission does not involve high-intensity operations against competent opponents employing sophisticated weapons offensively. In this sense INTERFET was fortunate not to encounter opponents that were willing to wage war against it in a more effective manner. It should also be pointed out that it was possible to be misled as to the apparent ease by which INTERFET established its authority. The determination and efficiency that characterised INTERFET operations, particularly on the border, in the Oecussi enclave and in the vicinity of Dili rapidly nipped any opposition in the bud. If anything the firm response and coherent policy of the force demonstrated that in order to make a force multinational without sacrificing functional interoperability, a limited number of countries need to accept responsibility for the conduct of any offensive operations that need to be undertaken. 155

In East Timor, as so often elsewhere, the military commander needed access to a balanced set of joint capabilities. Yet apart from the US, few nations today could ever hope to mount such an expeditionary force on their own. Hence the key for all INTERFET commanders was to get the individual members of the Coalition working together and, as much as possible, as a unified force. In reality, the breadth of maritime tasks undertaken by the naval component during STABILISE could not have been achieved without contributing

nation support. This holds true from both a practical and political perspective, for there were always two dimensions to the operation: what INTERFET was actually doing, and what it was perceived to be doing. The upshot of all this was that the naval component needed to be not just interoperable and cohesive, but also flexible and willing to compromise. NCC and his staff maintained a constant balancing act. Dealing with both bilateral and multilateral relationships, they had to remain focused on the success of the INTERFET mission, while ensuring that each national contingent achieved its political objectives.

Conclusion

Operation STABILISE was a success, but in historical terms the insertion and sustainment of INTERFET was by no means an enormous undertaking. ¹⁵⁶ No matter how well-led and implemented the operation, the fact remains that the ADF was stretched to the breaking point in providing a small division-sized expeditionary force only some 400 miles from the Australian mainland: 24 hours by sea, 90 minutes by air. Success, therefore, might equally be attributed to external factors, of which the most critical were Indonesia's decision not to oppose the Coalition's mission and US political support. In view of the importance of such outside issues shaping the operational environment, a common observation has been that fortune smiled on INTERFET. ¹⁵⁷ Dilli to Darwin was just within the ADF's capabilities: no threat, human or natural disrupted the Coalition's supply lines; all essential units managed to stay operational; and Australia's friends proved willing to cooperate. STABILISE also began at just the right time, with Exercise CROCODILE 99 establishing good working relationships among the individual service planners and smoothing integration of the component commands.

But one should not forget that diligence is the mother of good fortune. Multinational interoperability provided INTERFET's lynchpin, and at a fundamental level STABILISE worked because disparate forces could operate together to share the operational burden. Importantly, this came about not just through advanced technological compatibilities, but also from person-to-person links. Thus, crucial to implementing the operation were the ADF's deliberate and concerted efforts over previous decades to develop relations with both regional states and allies. This was nowhere more obvious than in the maritime arena, which possessed the added benefit of the Western world's long-practised policies of naval cooperation. Many years of training together, standardised doctrine, familiarity with each other's ways and habits, and the operating of compatible equipment ensured Coalition navies achieved and sustained the required levels of interoperability. This competence, and the ability of ships to carry out a large number of disparate activities simultaneously for extended periods, made sure that the Australian Navy could call on its core Coalition partners with a level of confidence unmatched by other environmental components.

Notes

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- For the official view, see: Department of Defence, *Defending Australia: Defence White Paper* 1994, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994.
- 3 D.J. Campbell, 'Maritime Power and the Australian Defence Force' in D. Stevens (ed), Maritime Power in the 20th Century: The Australian Experience, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1998, pp. 249-258.
- 4 A. Ryan, *Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks: Australian Defence Force Participation in the International Force East Timor*, Paper No. 304, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, November 2000, pp. 39-42.
- A member of the Australian public was quoted during the Sydney INTERFET welcome home parade as saying: 'I didn't know the Navy was in Timor'. Cited in P. Kinghorne, 'OPERATION STABILISE Australian Naval Participation in East Timor', *Naval Supply Newsletter*, June 2000, p. 25.
- 6 'Joint' connotes activities, operations, organisations, etc. in which elements of more than one Service of the same nation participate. 'Combined' signifies activities or operations by two or more forces or agencies of two or more allies. See: *The Navy Contribution to Australian Maritime Operations*, RAN Doctrine 2, Sea Power Centre – Australia, Canberra, 2005, pp. 239, 244.
- P. Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture at Georgetown University', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, April/June 2000, p. 9.
- 8 N. Friedman, *Seapower as Strategy: Navies and National Interests*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 2001, p. 3.
- 9 For an East Timor chronology, see: <www.un.org/peace/etimor/Untaetchrono.html>, accessed 20 April 2006.
- 10 TNI Tentara Nasional Indonesia.
- For an insightful and detailed summary of the TNI's multi-faceted role in East Timor, see: R. Lowry, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1996, pp. 151-162.
- 12 On 12 November 1991, Indonesian troops in Dili fired upon a peaceful memorial procession to a cemetery that had turned into a pro-independence demonstration. Over 271 East Timorese were killed. Total East Timorese casualties during the 1975-99 Indonesian occupation have been estimated at between 100,000 and 200,000.
- 13 'Question of East Timor', Report of the Secretary-General, 5 May 1999, <www.un.org/peace/etimor/docs/UntaetDr.htm>, accessed 20 April 2006.

- 44
- 14 For the text of the resolution, see: <www.un.org/peace/etimor/docs/UntaetDrs.htm>, accessed 20 April 2006.
- 15 East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2001, p. 61.
- 16 P. Edwards and D. Goldsworthy (eds), *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, Vol. 2: 1970s to 2000, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2003, p. 236.
- 17 Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT), 'A Visit to East Timor: 2 December 1999', Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, December 1999, p. 46.
- Militia goals included: removing the foreign presence; wreaking vengeance on pro-independence supporters; and sending a warning to other Indonesian regions with secessionist movements. See: Edwards and Goldsworthy, Facing North, p. 245.
- 19 East Timorese casualties in the wake of the Referendum have been variously estimated at between 1400 and 30,000.
- 20 For the text of Kofi Annan's press statements during this period, see: <www.un.org/News/ossg/sg/pages/speeches_search.html>, accessed 20 April 2006.
- 21 For the full text of the resolution, see: <www.un.org/peace/etimor/docs/UntaetDrs.htm>, accessed 20 April 2006.
- 22 Kofi Annan made the approach to Prime Minister John Howard on 6 September 1999. See: Edwards and Goldsworthy, *Facing North*, p. 248.
- 23 JSCFADT, 'Visit to East Timor', p. 50.
- 24 Ryan, Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks, p. ix.
- 25 See for example: C. Thayer, 'Australian Perceptions and Indonesian Reality', lecture to the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs (Dunedin Branch), Hocken Hall, The University of Otago, Dunedin, 12 May 1988.
- 26 Defending Australia: Defence White Paper 1994, p. 87.
- 27 Cited in Edwards and Goldsworthy, Facing North, p. 217.
- As late as December 1998, Prime Minister John Howard had reaffirmed Australian support for Indonesian sovereignty, although admitting that 'a decisive element of East Timorese opinion is insisting on an act of self-determination'. See: Edwards and Goldsworthy, *Facing North*, p. 228.
- 29 Edwards and Goldsworthy, Facing North, p. 216.
- 30 D.M. Horner, Making the Australian Defence Force, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 9.

- 31 'Massive plan to evacuate 10,000', *The Age*, Melbourne, 16 December 1998.
- 32 Department of Defence, Media release MIN067/99, 11 March 1999.
- 33 Ryan, Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks, pp. 39-41.
- 34 Interview with Air Marshal C.W. Adamson, RNZN Museum, 31 January 2002. Copy held by Sea Power Centre Australia (SPC-A), Canberra.
- 35 Interview with Commander W.M. Cummins, RNZN Museum, 15 February 2000. Copy held by SPC-A, Canberra.
- 36 'How Cosgrove led his warriors for peace', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 January 2000.
- 37 Interview with Air Marshal C.W. Adamson, RNZN Museum.
- 38 HMA Ships Kanimbla (ex-USS Saginaw) and Manoora (ex-USS Fairfax County).
- 39 'Operation STABILISE', *The Navy: Magazine of the Navy League of Australia*, Vol. 62, No. 1, January-March 2000, pp. 3-10.
- 40 B.D. Robertson, 'Not learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, April/June 2000, p. 11.
- 41 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 6.
- 42 Edwards and Goldsworthy, Facing North, p. 241.
- 43 In an apparent response to Australia's role in the East Timor crisis, on 16 September 1999 Indonesia abrogated the Australian-Indonesian Security Agreement signed on 18 December 1995.
- 44 ASEAN comprises: Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
- 45 Edwards and Goldsworthy, Facing North, p. 250.
- 46 Ryan, Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks, p. 40.
- 47 By mid-November 1999, Australia's commitment ashore had reached approximately 5500 troops. See: Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, p. 22.
- 48 Edwards and Goldsworthy, Facing North, p. 252.
- 49 Kinghorne, 'OPERATION STABILISE', p. 24.
- The ADF contribution to East Timor actually took place under the banner of Operation WARDEN.

 Operation STABILISE was the Coalition aspect.
- 51 B.A. White, 'Maritime Operations in East Timor: The HMAS MELBOURNE Experience', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, April/June 2000, p. 16.
- 52 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, RAN, US Naval Historical Centre, Washington, December 2004. Copy held by SPC-A, Canberra.

- Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 10.
- 54 Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report 1999-2000*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2000, p. 270.
- 55 Kinghorne, 'OPERATION STABILISE', p. 24.
- 56 HMAS Tobruk 'Operational Report 18 Sep 99-05 Nov 99', 5 November 1999, held by SPC-A, Canberra.
- 57 Captain (N) R. Girouard, 'Op Toucan', *Maritime Affairs*, Fall 2000, p. 27.
- 58 For example, US Forces INTERFET liaison officers deployed to Brisbane on 31 August 1999. See: L.M. Cross, R.P. Strong and D. Delauney, 'EAST TIMOR: A Case Study in C4 Innovation', CHIPS The Department of the Navy Information Technology Magazine, Winter 2003, www.chips.navy.mil/archives/03_winter/webpages/timor.htm, accessed 14 February 2006.
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- 60 Kinghorne, 'OPERATION STABILISE', p. 24.
- 61 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 62 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 63 For a detailed discussion, see: M. Kelly, T. McCormack, P. Muggleton and B. Oswald, 'Legal aspects of Australia's involvement in East Timor', *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 841, pp. 101-139.
- 64 UNSCR 1244 (1999).
- 65 Kelly, et al, 'Legal aspects of Australia's involvement in East Timor'.
- 66 HMA Ships *Manoora* and *Kanimbla* have since taken on the role of command ship, both vessels effectively performing this task, most notably during Operations SLIPPER, BASTILLE and CATALYST (Iraq 2001-03); Operation HELPEM FREN (the Solomon Islands 2003); Operation SUMATRA ASSIST (Indonesia 2005); Operation ASTUTE (East Timor 2006); and Operation QUICKSTEP (Fiji 2006).
- 67 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 10.
- For an Australian perspective on the development of US involvement in East Timor, see: Edwards and Goldsworthy, *Facing North*, pp. 248-249.
- 69 Interview Commander W.M. Cummins, RNZN Museum.
- 70 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 7.
- 71 Cross, et al, 'EAST TIMOR: A Case Study in C4 Innovation'.
- 72 Kelly, et al, 'Legal Aspects of Australia's Involvement in East Timor'.

- 73 HMAS Adelaide 'Report of Proceedings September 1999', 12 October 1999, SPC-A, Canberra.
- 74 Discussion with Captain D.W. Bates, RAN (NCC Chief of Staff in 1999), 21 February 2006.
- P. Lockwood, 'RAN Participation in East Timor: Perspective from HMAS *Darwin*', presentation to 2001 King-Hall Naval History Conference, Canberra, 27 July 2001. Copy held by SPC-A, Canberra.
- 76 D. Wilson, Warden to Tanager: RAAF Operations in East Timor, Banner Books, Maryborough, 2003, p. 9.
- 77 Interview with Commander W.M. Cummins, RNZN Museum.
- 78 The Brisbane Institute, 'Questions to Major-General Cosgrove', 16 May 2000, <www.brisinst. org.au/resources/cosgrove_peter_cos.html>, accessed 20 April 2006.
- 79 J. Goldrick, 'East Timor', Journal of the Australian Naval Institute, April/June 2000, p. 25.
- 80 Interview with Major General P. Cosgrove, RNZN Museum, December 1999. Copy held by SPC-A, Canberra.
- 81 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 9.
- 82 Wilson, Warden to Tanager, p. 13.
- 83 Like the clearance divers, the three man HODSU was embarked in *Success* and called forward as soon as a special forces presence was established in the port precinct.
- 84 HMAS *Jervis Bay* averaged three trips per week between Darwin and Dili. Up to the end of February 2000 she had carried 10,740 passengers, 447 vehicles and 2505 tonnes of cargo. See: HMAS *Jervis Bay*, 'Report of Proceedings February 2000', 6 March 2000, SPC-A, Canberra.
- 85 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 86 HMAS *Adelaide*, 'Report of Proceedings September 1999'.
- 87 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 29.
- 88 Interview with Air Marshal C.W. Adamson, RNZN Museum.
- 89 Interview with Commander W.M. Cummins, RNZN Museum.
- 90 Centre for Strategic Studies, *Strategic and Military Lessons From East Timor*, Strategic Briefing Papers, Vol. 2, Part 1, February 2000. See: <www.vuw.ac.nz/css/docs/Strategic_Briefing_Papers/Vol.2%20Feb%202000/East%20Timor.pdf>, accessed 1 May 2006.
- 91 HMAS *Anzac* 'Report of Proceedings September 1999', 6 October 1999, SPC-A, Canberra.
- 92 Goldrick, 'East Timor', p. 25.

- 93 'Special Navy communit supports the East Timor peacekeeping force', <www.gcn.com/print/vol18 no33/749-1.html>, accessed 16 May 2006.
- 94 Cross, et al, 'EAST TIMOR: A Case Study in C4 Innovation'.
- 95 For a description of GCCS, see: <www.disa.mil/gccs-j/index.html>, accessed 28 April 2006.
- 96 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 97 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', pp. 26-27.
- 98 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, RAN, RNZN Museum, 3 November 2000. Copy held by SPC-A.
- 99 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 6
- 100 Goldrick, 'East Timor', p. 24.
- 101 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 27.
- 102 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 103 P.J. Criss, 'Air Operations in Australia's Defence', *United Service*, Vol. 52, No. 3, p. 25.
- 104 91.7 per cent by weight and 93.2 per cent by volume. See: Kinghorne, 'OPERATION STABILISE', p. 26.
- 105 The 'oil spot' concept entails establishing dominance in key locations from which the surrounding and interconnecting areas are influenced and subsequently controlled.
- 106 For details of these operations, see: Ryan, *Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks*, p. 74.
- 107 All beaches used were first swum by RAN clearance divers and surveyed by HODSU to establish their suitability.
- 108 J. Pritchard and P. Arnold, 'A Much Neglected Lady Proves She Can Still Deliver the Goods: HMAS TOBRUK's role in Operation Spitfire/Warden/Stabilise', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, April/June 2000, p. 21.
- 109 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 28.
- 110 'Operation STABILISE', The Navy: Magazine of the Navy League of Australia, p. 7.
- 111 'Stallion lifts a series of firsts', Navy News, Special INTERFET edition, December 1999, p. 13.
- 112 Ryan, Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks, p. 80.
- 113 USS Belleau Wood's team assisted on 23 October and off-loaded 22 ISO 20-foot containers. A similar operation on 29 October using USS Peleliu's team off-loaded 16 ISO 20-foot containers. It is worth noting that the remaining 101 containers carried by HMAS Tobruk

- during the operation were off-loaded using her own crane. See: Pritchard and Arnold, 'A Much Neglected Lady Proves She Can Still Deliver the Goods', p. 21.
- 114 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 12.
- 115 White, 'Maritime Operations in East Timor', p. 17.
- 116 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 27.
- 117 Interview with Commander W.M. Cummins, RNZN Museum.
- 118 HMAS Sydney, 'Conduct of a Surveillance and Presence Mission', 3 December 1999, SPC-A, Canberra.
- 119 See for example: 'Interview Vice Admiral David Shackleton', *Proceedings*, January 2002, p. 62; and White, 'Maritime Operations in East Timor', p. 18.
- 120 Pritchard and Arnold, 'HMAS TOBRUK's role in Operation Spitfire/Warden/Stabilise', p. 21.
- 121 For the full text, see: <www.un.org/peace/etimor/docs/UntaetDrs.htm>, accessed 20 April 2006.
- 122 Although the INTERFET handover began on 1 February 2000, UNTAET had already initiated operations and established the basic elements of its administrative structure.
- 123 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 12.
- 124 White, 'Maritime Operations in East Timor', p. 16.
- 125 Interview with Commander W.M. Cummins, RNZN Museum.
- 126 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 14.
- 127 See: <www.nwdc.navy.mil/Concepts/Sea_Basing/SeaBasing.aspx>, accessed 2 May 2006.
- 128 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 9.
- 129 Figure cited in J. Crawford and G. Harper, *Operation East Timor: The New Zealand Defence Force in East Timor 1999-2001*, Reed Publishing, Auckland, 2001, p. 74.
- 130 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 12.
- 131 'Operation STABILISE', The Navy: Magazine of the Navy League of Australia, p. 6.
- 132 Message from Maritime Commander Australia to HMCS Protecteur, 200616ZOCT 99, copy held by SPC-A, Canberra.
- 133 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 28.
- 134 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 26.
- 135 Girouard, 'Op Toucan', p. 26.
- 136 'Working Party Joins in Spirit', Navy News, Special INTERFET edition, December 1999, p. 7.

- 137 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 13.
- 138 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 139 Ryan, Primary Responsibility and Primary Risks, p. 28.
- 140 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', pp. 7-8.
- 141 Robertson assumed duties as NCC from November 1999.
- 142 Interview with Commodore J.R. Stapleton, NHC.
- 143 'Australian Operations in East Timor', Proceedings, December 1999, p. 4.
- 144 'Australian Chief of Navy', Proceedings, January 2000, p. 57.
- 145 Extract from HMAS Darwin 'Post-deployment report', 6 November 1999, SPC-A, Canberra.
- 146 HMAS Darwin 'Post-deployment report'.
- 147 Kinghorne, 'OPERATION STABILISE', p. 29.
- 148 'France moves quickly on UN request', Navy News, Special INTERFET edition, December 1999, p. 11.
- 149 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 10.
- 150 'Brief to Maritime Commander Visit to East Timor', 18 October 1999, East Timor file, SPC-A, Canberra.
- 151 E.S. Miller, 'Interoperability of Rules of Engagement in Multinational Maritime Operations', CRM 95-184/October 1995, Center for Naval Analyses, Virginia, p. 14.
- 152 Discussion with Captain D.W. Bates, February 2006.
- 153 Robertson, 'Not Learning the Lessons of Operation STABILISE', p. 11.
- 154 Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 7.
- 155 Ryan, Primary Responsibility and Primary Risks, p. 64.
- 156 The landing force for the assault at Balikpapan in Borneo on 1 July 1945 numbered more than 33,000. By the end of the first day the Allies had landed 10,500 assault troops, 700 vehicles and 1950 tonnes of stores.
- 157 General Cosgrove, like many commanders before him, has noted the 'ever present part that luck played'. See: Cosgrove, 'The ANZAC Lecture', p. 9.