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## THE PORTUGUESE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CREATION OF THE FALIN- TIL- DEFENCE FORCES OF EAST TI- MOR

### Abstract

In the year 2000, as a result of the process of state-building in the post-conflict situation in East Timor and with the support of international donors, the Transitional Administration of the United Nations agreed to create the Falintil-East Timor Defence Forces constituted from the Armed Forces of Liberation and Independence of East Timor. This paper seeks to reflect on Portugal's contributions to this process of transformation and development which took place between 2000 and 2016. It maintains that foreign Portuguese policy has supported the state-building process in East Timor, essentially in the domain of defence, by establishing mutual Military Cooperation agreements.

### Keywords

East-Timor, Portugal, Falintil; Falintil- East Timor Defence Forces, Military Cooperation.

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## INTRODUCTION

East Timor, officially the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (*Timor Lorosa'e*, in its native language) is one of the most recent countries in the world occupying the east half of the island of Timor, situated in south-eastern Asia. Its unique land borders separate it from Indonesia, west of the main part of its territory, and to the east, south and west of the Oecusse enclave. It also has a maritime border, in the Timor Sea, with Australia to the south.

After centuries of Portuguese colonial rule, the coup d'état in the metropolis on April 25, 1974 led to the hasty decolonisation of this former colony, creating instability in the territory and leaving an uncertain future ahead. Following a civil war, the pro-independence movement, the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (FRENTILIN)<sup>1</sup>, claimed victory in the capital (Dili) declaring independence on November 28, 1975<sup>2</sup>. Fearing an uncontrolled movement throughout the territory, Indonesian military forces invaded the eastern part of the island on December 7, 1975, destroying armed resistance to the occupation.

Following strong pressure from the international community, a democratic process that developed in 1999 to determine the future of the territory demonstrated an overwhelming majority in favour of self-determination and independence. On May 20, 2002, East Timor became an independent nation. In preparing for that moment they were taking steps towards the creation of their own Armed Forces. This article discusses this process in which Portugal played a fundamental role.

In mid-2000, as a result of the (re)building and post-conflict process of the State of East Timor, the United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAET), with the support of international donors, agreed to the creation of the F-FDTL<sup>3</sup> whose recruitment base was the Falintil<sup>4</sup>.

This article reflects on Portugal's main contributions to the transformation and development of the Falintil into the F-FDTL in the period from 2000 to 2015 and, consequently, to the promotion of peace, security and development in East Timor. This was an unprecedented and little-known process, in which the authors of this paper participated actively and at different times in the construction of East Timor's

1 Throughout the text we shall use, where appropriate, the original acronym in Portuguese, FRENTILIN, *Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* (The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor).

2 SCHMID, Alex y JONGMAN, Albert (2005). *Political Terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories and literature*. Amsterdam; New York: North-Holland; New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988 (2005 edition). TAYLOR, John (1999). *East Timor: The Price of Freedom*. Zed Books. ISBN 1-85649-840-9.

3 F-FDTL: *Falintil - Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste*.

4 Falintil: *Forças Armadas para a Libertação e Independência de Timor-Leste*.

pillar of defence, which affords a different perspective and unites two sister countries located at opposite sides of the globe.

In this context, the central question which we will attempt to answer is whether Portugal's efforts between 2000 and 2015, and especially in its initial phase, contributed to the constitution of the F-FDTL, and to assess whether the implementation of the process known as Defence Sector Reform (DSR) contributed to the consolidation of the Timorese State and its Armed Forces.

## CONCEPTUAL AND ACADEMIC DEBATE-THE CURRENT SITUATION

Within the conceptual and academic debate on interventionism in East Timor, Oliver Richmond and Jason Franks (2009)<sup>5</sup>, as well as Caroline Hughes<sup>6</sup> and others, have made major contributions to the evaluation of the nature of the so-called "liberal peace"<sup>7</sup>. In the view of these authors, the construction of a liberal peace requires a long-term commitment between external intervention and the local population that must be involved in the formulation of the social contract and the conditions for its development. They advocate that the process in East Timor, which required external military intervention, was developed, however, with the imposition of international donors and organisations based on elite top-down logic and the advice of foreign technicians that gradually imposed reforms to the detriment of a bottom-up logic with greater Timorese participation.

On the other hand, Raquel Freire and Paula Lopes<sup>8</sup> argue that hybrid, more inclusive models capable of generating development in countries emerging from systemic

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5 RICHMOND, Oliver P. and FRANKS, Jason. *Liberal Peace Transitions: Between Statebuilding and Peacebuilding*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2009.

6 HUGHES, Caroline. «We just take what they offer: Community empowerment in post-war Timor-Leste». In Newman, Edward *et al.* *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*, Japan: United Nations University Press, 2009.

7 RICHMOND, Oliver P. y FRANKS, Jason. *Liberal Peace Transitions: Between Statebuilding and Peacebuilding*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2009, pp. 2-4. RICHMOND and FRANKS present the post-conflict reconstruction model employed by the international community for (re)constructing states in the wake of conflict resolution, as one that operates in social, political, economic, conceptual and methodological dimensions for the construction of a liberal State. This model encompasses a set of tasks carried out by external agents in the field of support for governance. Tasks that are translated into reforms range from issues related to security, the state and its people, to the adoption of democratisation measures and measures in the field of human rights, civil society, law and public order, economic liberalisation and development aid.

8 FREIRE, Maria Raquel. «Consolidação da paz em Timor-Leste: um modelo híbrido – entre a formalidade e a informalidade». Revista *Globo*. pp. 50-53. Available at <[http://www.ces.uc.pt/ficheiros2/files/GLOBO\\_MRFreire\\_.pdf](http://www.ces.uc.pt/ficheiros2/files/GLOBO_MRFreire_.pdf)> [1 December 2016].

crises contribute better and more decisively to sustaining peace with direct consequences for the sustainment of development. According to Manuel Pureza<sup>9</sup>, within this framework external intervention in East Timor reflects the new trends and functions of the United Nations (UN) that combine post-Westphalian rationale with typically Westphalian time horizons, a paradigm that gives rise to certain reservations and concerns regarding the practice of emancipation and dependence on UN financing in some countries.

In the view of Mónica Ferro<sup>10</sup>, Nuno Canas Mendes and André Saramago<sup>11</sup> the successive shared administrations in East Timor seem to be the best example of a state-building model in the context of a plural international society, and the best answer to the problems of states with fragility issues. The academic work and systematisation of Portuguese participation in this theatre of operations developed by the Military Academy and by Carlos Braz at the University of Coimbra,<sup>12</sup> among others, show the relevance of the peace contributions provided by Portuguese Army battalions and of the companies of the Republican National Guard (RNG) integrated in UN peace missions. Portugal's action in this area, along with the activities of its Armed Forces and State Security Forces in Security Sector Reform (SSR) and DSR in East Timor stand out, constituting examples of proactive intervention in favour of state capacity-building, increasing the international prestige of Portugal and its Armed and Security Forces.

The article is developed within the framework of liberal theory, based on the idea that the establishment of democracies contributes significantly to the dynamics of cooperation between States and, consequently, to world peace, which connects with the UN's global interventionist policy. Thus, democracies tend to be more peaceful, requiring less external intervention in their domestic affairs and in their relations with other States.

Over and above these considerations, the UN model of intervention in the context of its support for SSR and DSR is part of this current of thought, based on the idea that development and security are essential and mutually reliant for global stability, peace and security. Therefore, a reflection on the post-conflict (re) construction processes is fundamental for the identification of possible improvements in interven-

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9 PUREZA, José Manuel. «Quem Salvou Timor Leste? Novas Referências para o internacionalismo solidário». Available at <http://www.ces.uc.pt/publicacoes/oficina/ficheiros/164.pdf> [3 November 2016].

10 FERRO, Mónica. *Construção de Estados – As administrações internacionais das Nações Unidas*, Lisboa: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, 2005.

11 MENDES, Nuno Canas y SARAMAGO, André. *Dimensions of state-building: Timor-Leste in Focus*, Lisboa: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, 2011.

12 ACADEMIA MILITAR. Editorial. *Timor-Leste: Contributo de Portugal para a construção do Estado*, Lisboa: Academia Militar, 2012. BRAZ, Carlos M. M. «A manutenção da paz e a sua sustentabilidade: As missões da ONU e a contribuição militar portuguesa em Timor-Leste. 2013».

tionist models and methods for training institutions and improving human living conditions through social progress.

To this effect, the bilateral cooperation that was established between Portugal and East Timor from the outset of UN intervention, particularly in the field of Defence and the transformation of the FALINTIL into FALINTIL -FDTL, merits specific analysis. This is a historic milestone for both countries, as well as for the framework of UN intervention, with common cooperative interests and strategies and recognised in the field of UN intervention in fragile states in the post-Cold War era.

The present analysis is based on four key concepts: *Foreign Policy*, defined as the set of actions developed by a state in conducting international relations with other state- and non-state actors<sup>13</sup> in which the Official Development Assistance (ODA) of other states is a vector of the strategic action of the state; *Construction of the State*, which represents the process of capacity-building and the training of institutions and the legitimisation of the State, conducted mainly at domestic level in which international assistance with state-building plays a limited role<sup>14</sup>; it is also important to reflect on the consolidation of the Defence and Security sector: the *Security Sector Reform* (SSR), a process of review, implementation, monitoring and evaluation conducted by the national authorities designed to reinforce effective and responsible security for the state and its people, without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law<sup>15</sup>, which includes a diverse range of state sectors given that defence reform constitutes a fundamental pillar of state institutions; and, finally, the chapter entitled *Cooperation*, which defines interaction between states which is targeted at achieving common goals<sup>16</sup>.

Following Durkheim's arguments<sup>17</sup>, by creating a social link, it is also interesting to reflect on the role of bilateral and multilateral military and technical cooperation (MTC), between Portugal and East Timor, with national parameters as a reference, as well as the legislative framework that guided the decade and a half of cooperation between these countries. If Portuguese military-technical cooperation has contributed to the SSR and DSR, then we can agree that Portuguese foreign policy will have

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13 JACKSON, Robert; SØRENSEN, Georg. *Introduction to International Relations – Theories and Approaches*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

14 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT: OECD. «Concepts and Dilemmas of State-building in Fragile Situations FROM FRAGILITY TO RESILIENCE». *Journal on Development*, n.º3, vol. 9 2008, p. 8. Available at <<http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/41100930.pdf>> [22 November 2016].

15 UNITED NATIONS: UN. «The United Nations SSR Perspective». New York, 2012, p. 2. Available at <<http://www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/pdf/securityreform.pdf>> [22 November 2016].

16 SOUSA, Fernando de; MENDES, Pedro. *Dicionário de Relações Internacionais*, 3ª Edição, Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2014, p. xiv.

17 SOUSA, Fernando de; MENDES, Pedro: *op. cit.*

supported the construction of the State, essentially in the field of defence, to which we dedicate this academic paper based on the authors' personal experience at different times in the process.

The article focuses on two aspects in relation to Portugal's participation and that of its Armed Forces in the process of the creation, construction and consolidation of the F-FDTL. Following an initial analysis of Portugal's support for the construction of the State of East Timor, we will then study its contribution to the construction of the F-FDTL via military cooperation, offering a critical analysis of the process, which represented an innovative challenge for Portugal, one of whose consequences was the rapprochement between Portugal and East Timor and the projection of Portugal globally as a producer of international security.

## BUILDING THE STATE OF TIMOR: PORTUGUESE SUPPORT

International Relations are essentially focused on the study of relations of cooperation and conflict between states or other agents of the international system. This chapter will attempt to address relations of cooperation between Portugal and East Timor and the intervention of the UN as the organisation responsible for the administration of the Timorese territory between 2000 and 2002, and furthermore to analyse the relevance of the different social agents in liberal peacebuilding between 2000 and 2014.

From Moravcsik's perspective,<sup>18</sup> national and international societies become interested in and can shape state behaviour, tailoring its interests and reflecting it in their foreign policies. States exist in a global anarchic system, acting rationally. First, they opt for different alternatives according to their own identity and motivations, and only later do they interact in the pursuit of common and shared interests. The identity and motivations of individuals determine state preferences. For the former Portuguese Foreign Minister, João de Deus Pinheiro<sup>19</sup>, foreign policy should always be based upon and mirror domestic politics, in this way generating consensus and being global. This premise constitutes a permanent challenge for states and for political leadership.

As we have seen, Portugal and East Timor were linked historically, from the mid-sixteenth century until 1975<sup>20</sup>. In that same year, directly after its declaration of independence, East Timor was invaded by Indonesia, which annexed its territory, turning it into a province of Jakarta. The FALINTIL, the armed wing of the independence

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18 MORAVCSIK, Andrew. «Taking preferences seriously: a Liberal theory of International Politics. International Organization». *International Organization*, n.º 51, vol. 4 1997, pp. 513–553. Available at <<https://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/preferences.pdf>> [3 November 2016].

19 PINHEIRO, João Deus. «Grandes eixos da Política Externa no Portugal de Hoje». *Comunicação - CDN/88*. Oporto 18 February 1988.

20 TIMOR-LESTE. «História». Available at <<http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=29&lang=pt>> [5 December 2016].

movement for Timorese self-determination, together with the civilian population and with the support of the diaspora, led the armed struggle against Indonesian occupation for almost 24 years.<sup>21</sup> Portugal supported the Timorese struggle within the international community, calling attention to the issue of Timor, especially in relation to the defence of the human rights of the Timorese people<sup>22</sup>.

In May 1999, the UN, Portugal and Indonesia agreed that a referendum be held allowing the Timorese people to vote in favour of or against the proposed special autonomy of East Timor, which had been part of Indonesia since 1975.<sup>23</sup> The result was the rejection of the special autonomy and Indonesian occupation in favour of self-determination.

After a period of intense violence, on October 25, 1999, the UN, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, under Security Council resolution no. 1272/99, already referred to above, provided for the establishment of a UN Transitional Administration in East Timor<sup>24</sup> aimed at guaranteeing peace and guiding the rebuilding process of the state.<sup>25</sup>

In this context, based on a study prepared by King's College, London, and a proposal from the National Council of Timorese Resistance (NCTR), the UN decided on the creation of the F-FDTL, attributing to it the mission of guaranteeing the military defence of its territory and its people, as well as assisting the civil community<sup>26</sup>. With

21 SANTOS, Cláudia M. «25 anos de luta pela independência», revista *Janus* 2002. Available at <[http://janusonline.pt/2002/2002\\_2\\_20.html](http://janusonline.pt/2002/2002_2_20.html)> [10 November 2016].

22 PINHEIRO, João Deus. «Grandes eixos da Política Externa no Portugal de Hoje». *Comunicação - CDN/88*. Oporto, 18 February 1988.

23 FERRO, Mónica. *Construção de Estados – As administrações internacionais das Nações Unidas*, Lisboa: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, 2005, pp. 148-149.

24 United Nations. «UNTAET». Available at internet en <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/312/77/PDF/N9931277.pdf?OpenElement>> [10 November 2016]. UNTAET was given absolute responsibility for the administration of the territory of East Timor with the ability to provide all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of Justice. Its mandate was to provide for the security and maintenance of law and order throughout the territory of East Timor; to establish an effective administration; to assist in the development of civil and social services; to ensure the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance; to support capacity-building for self-government and to assist in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.

25 GOMES, José J. «Timor-Leste: O referendo e os resultados das eleições de 1999», revista *Janus* 2002. Available at <[http://janusonline.pt/2002/2002\\_2\\_10.html](http://janusonline.pt/2002/2002_2_10.html)> [10 November 2016].

26 UNITED NATIONS. «On the establishment of a Defence Force for East Timor». Available at <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/etimor/untaetR/reg20011.htm>>; «On the establishment of a Defence Force for East Timor». Available at <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/etimor/untaetR/Reg9e.pdf>> [10 November 2016].

a light infantry force of 1500 soldiers and 1500 reservists<sup>27</sup> they were to be “... composed of a Joint Command, a component of Regular Forces constituted by two infantry battalions and a naval component, supported by an instruction centre, a logistics base and a reserve support unit ...”,<sup>28</sup> which would constitute the military contingent and the system of armed forces to be implemented in East Timor under DSR.

In the state-building process in a post-conflict situation it is worth considering whether Defence Sector Reform (included under SSR) is carried out in a timely manner –taking into account cultural, socio-political, economic factors ... and coordinating the actions of the different actors– and whether the likelihood of a consolidated peace and developed societies resulting from the conflict is in reality greater<sup>29</sup>. These were the measures that the Timorese leaders, with substantial external support from countries such as Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and the US, among others, adjusted and developed in order to achieve a professional, modern and consolidated F-FDTL. The “Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030”<sup>30</sup>, the implementation of the strategic study for the F-FDTL known as “Force 2020”<sup>31</sup> and the “Forces Development Plan”<sup>32</sup> are all examples of efforts at the institutional consolidation of DSR, under the umbrella of SSR. These are documents that, in the area of defence, allow us

27 REES, Edward. «Under Pressure: Falintil– Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste, three decades of Defence Force development in Timor-Leste 1975 – 2004». *Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Working Paper – n.º 139*. Geneva, 2004. Available at <<http://pt.scribd.com/doc/165069051/Under-Pressure-FALINTIL-Forcas-de-Defesa-de-Timor-Leste>> [10 November 2016].

28 PIRES, Mário Lemos. «Questões de defesa e segurança no futuro país», revista *Janus* 2002. Available at <[http://janusonline.pt/2002/2002\\_2\\_16.html](http://janusonline.pt/2002/2002_2_16.html)> [10 November 2016].

29 PUREZA, José Manuel *et al.* *Prevenção de Conflitos Armados, Cooperação para o Desenvolvimento e Integração Justa no Sistema Internacional*, Coimbra: Faculty of Economy, Coimbra University, 2005, p. 90.

30 TIMOR-LESTE. «Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento». Díli, 2011, pp. 10-11. Available at <[http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plano-Estrategico-de-Desenvolvimento\\_PT1.pdf](http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plano-Estrategico-de-Desenvolvimento_PT1.pdf)> [10 November 2016]. The “Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030” presents a twenty-year overview that reflects the aspirations of the East Timorese people to create a strong and prosperous nation. The plan was developed to inspire change, to support bold, collective action and to plan for a better future.

31 TIMOR-LESTE. «Conceito de emprego das Forças Armadas». Díli, 2009. Available at <<http://www.mj.gov.tl/jornal/?q=node/1710>> [10 November 2016]. The long-term strategic plan “Force 2020” represented a model for the consolidation and development of the F-FDTL, in accordance with the priorities laid down by the Timorese government. The plan was designed to permit cooperation between the F-FDTL and other security forces, aimed at enabling the interoperability required by the integrated National Security System promoting national security in the near future.

32 TIMOR-LESTE. «Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento» Díli, 2011, pg. 203. Available at <[http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plano-Estrategico-de-Desenvolvimento\\_PT1.pdf](http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plano-Estrategico-de-Desenvolvimento_PT1.pdf)> [10 November 2016]. The “Force Development Plan” is aimed at defining the F-FDTL’s aptitudes that guarantee its flexibility and versatility, developing joint military capabilities with forces and security corps and a capacity to respond to unexpected challenges and threats, thus strengthening security and development in East Timor.

to understand how the F-FDTL contributes to defence from external threats and to national security, and in collaborating with efforts to combat threats to peace and to further regional and global stability<sup>33</sup>.

According to Falur Ratelaek<sup>34</sup>, Chief of Staff of the F-FDTL, the members of the FALINTIL force stationed in Aileu in precarious conditions and survival mode were aware that external agents had not fully foreseen the constitution of armed forces, as there were divided opinions as to whether East Timor really needed them. When the King's College London report was presented to them, the Timorese political decision-makers and the FALINTIL chose the designated third option (the other two options presented by the King's College raised the possibility of no army and one police corps, or an armed force with only one terrestrial component). In keeping with their history, the Timorese wished to create the F-FDTL as a symbol of the struggle and unity of the Timorese people, to defend their national sovereignty and reward the peace efforts of the international community, contributing to peace, security and humanitarian operations in support of the sovereignty of the Timorese State.

East Timor recognises the relevance of Portugal's role as catalyst and coordinator within the international community during the years of struggle for independence, as well as its willingness to provide assistance, as demonstrated in the first F-FDTL Donor Conference held in 2000. The Timorese were always inclined to accept Portuguese assistance and that of its military in the process of building the F-FDTL rather than that of other countries such as Australia, South Korea, Thailand or New Zealand, which were also directly engaged in the initial process of establishing the F-FDTL.

The historical relationship, the common language and religion, as well as the geopolitical position of Portugal were determining factors for this preference. On the other hand, Portugal had a moral duty to step forward with its help and to fulfil its obligations seeking reconciliation for the past when it abandoned East Timor to its fate in 1974/75 at the mercy of Indonesia with its cravings for regional power.

Thus, one could say that strategic cooperation relations between Portugal and East Timor, and the provision of credit, materials and military equipment as well as specialised personnel (especially members of the military forces, but also Portuguese teachers) to participate in the selection, training and organisation of the initial F-FDTL structure<sup>35</sup>,

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33 TIMOR-LESTE. «Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento 2011-2030». 2011, pp. 200-207. Available at <[http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plano-Estrategico-de-Desenvolvimento\\_PT1.pdf](http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plano-Estrategico-de-Desenvolvimento_PT1.pdf)> [3 November 2016].

34 RATELAEK, Falur. «Entrevista sobre as Falintil - Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste com o Chefe de Estado-Maior das Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste». Lisbon, 2014.

35 JUNQUEIRA, João P. R.; PIRES, Rui M. S. O Exército nos trilhos da Cooperação, Lisboa: Secção de Cooperação Militar e Alianças do Gabinete do General Chefe do Estado-Maior do Exército, 2009, pp. 110-125.

reflect the fundamental principles defended by Moravcsik in the relationship between the domestic rebuilding process and foreign aid.<sup>36</sup>

The key actors in present-day international politics are the individuals and specific groups with influence on the processes. States represent a subset of societal actors, wherein social pressures often determine national preferences. In this sense, their official representatives define the preferences of states acting consciously in international politics in accordance with the interests of that society and with the pressures to which they are subjected. We believe that this happened in East Timor in relation to its preference and insistence on Portugal in the “Timorese cause”, which proved decisive for the recent history of both countries.

The interdependence between state preferences influences their behaviour, in other words, relations between states conform to their interests and not their power. On this assumption, the cooperation established between Portugal and East Timor in the field of defence, bearing in mind the social actors involved, is an example of the interest of the two states in the construction of an independent State.

Since the outset of the construction of the State of East Timor, Portugal has actively participated, particularly in the defence sector, with military cooperation activities in human resource development processes and the institutional training of the F-FDTL<sup>37</sup>. It is noteworthy that in the framework of Official Development Assistance (Oda) to East Timor, Portugal had donated almost €470 million up to 2014 through its foreign policy activities.<sup>38</sup> Official Development Assistance is provided in the framework of East-West, North-South relations, the fruit of a simplistic bipolar view of the world, of decolonization and the dynamics of globalisation<sup>39</sup>, constituting financing and state-building mechanisms for the development of its primary functions, to guarantee the security and development of the country.

Based on its geographic and geostrategic position, Portugal has conducted a policy of strategic cooperation and ODA with a political dimension, with which it seeks to contribute to its national affirmation within the European Union (EU), the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) and worldwide. In this context, it constitutes a meeting point between civilizations and continents, uniting Europe

36 MORAVCSIK, Andrew. «Liberalism and International Relations Theory». *Center for European Studies*, Paper No. 92-6 de 1992. Harvard University, pp. 2-36. Available at <[http://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/liberalism\\_working.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/liberalism_working.pdf)> [3 November 2016].

37 AZEVEDO, Gonçalo J. S.; CALMEIRO, Luís M. A. *O Exército Português em Timor-Leste*. Lisboa: Secção de Cooperação Militar e Alianças do Gabinete do General Chefe do Estado-Maior do Exército, 2004, pp. 170-179.

38 CAMÕES – INSTITUTO DA COOPERAÇÃO E DA LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA. «Cooperação Portugal – Timor-Leste». Available at <<http://www.instituto-camoes.pt>> [03 November 2016].

39 PALMA, Elisabete Cortes. *Cultura, Desenvolvimento e Política Externa: Ajuda Pública ao Desenvolvimento nos Países Africanos Lusófonos*, Lisboa: Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, 2006. *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

with Asia, Africa and America. At European level, it is affirmed by its own diverse identity and its own historical and cultural heritage, enriched and based on a secular relationship with many countries on different continents, an aspect that is most tangibly visible in the CPLP.

Over the last few years, affirmation in the international community has been sought through an active agenda and constructive strategic cooperation, integrated in a globalised context, prioritising the ODA of Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa (PALOP) since the eighties and East Timor since 1999. This dynamic, based on a common language, as well as historical and cultural ties, has permitted the consolidation and strengthening of friendship and cooperation among the CPLP member-states. In the execution of ODA programmes Portugal's yardstick is the set of standards defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), where the Armed Forces and the State Security Corps become the agents of development through activities of military assistance and humanitarian aid focused on institutional training and human and social development (Portugal, 1999)<sup>40</sup>.

## BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION ON DEFENCE

Since the end of the Cold War, the Armed Forces of the developed countries, in addition to their own mission –the military defence of their territory and the safeguarding of the state– have developed other types of missions, including assistance to developing countries and/or those emerging from a situation of conflict in the constitution and/or reform of their Armed Forces, as well as in the development of capabilities in the field of peace operations and humanitarian assistance. To this end, developed (and developing) states with common interests have concluded military cooperation agreements that have been fundamental for the improvement and development of a labour force that is assigned to the Security and Defence sector.

When responding to a joint effort of the countries responsible for training activities and the countries receiving the aid, these cooperation activities of an essentially military nature represent a significant step towards international peace and security. Likewise, they represent a new employment model for the Armed Forces within what is called “new defence diplomacy” in a framework of peaceful employment through the signing of cooperation agreements based on common interests.

While during the Cold War era military assistance to allies and aligned countries was understood as part of a *real politik* programme in the strict pursuit of national interests –“the old Defence diplomacy”– military cooperation is now perceived as a means to achieve a wide range of foreign policy and security objectives, an essential process for promoting the control of the Armed Forces by democratic governments

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40 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the government of the Portuguese Republic no. 43/1999, 18 May 1999.

in support of liberal democracy, good governance, human rights and the training of developing States and/or those emerging from conflict situations and wrestling with their own security and defence issues<sup>41</sup>.

Portugal, through the special units of its Armed Forces, has participated for more than three decades in the framework of this “new diplomacy of defence” in various military assistance and advisory missions, particularly in its former colonies, for the constitution and reform of the PALOP and East Timor Armed Forces. These are activities considered essential for institutional and human development, based on respect for democratic institutions and for the human rights of states. Portuguese MTC activities began in 1978 with the PALOP countries, aligned with one of the fundamental axes of its foreign and security policy, the CPLP, created on July 17, 1996. In this way, it was designed to deepen Portugal’s relations with the PALOP and, since its accession to the CPLP in 2002, with East Timor<sup>42</sup>.

For Portugal, the use of military technical cooperation alongside its integration at European level and with the Atlantic Alliance, translates into a contribution to world peace and global development as well as its affirmation on the international scene, supporting the organisation of military structures, the formation of cadres, both in the countries that receive support, and in Portugal itself. For the countries receiving external support, Portuguese military cooperation allows for the development of the human factor and the consolidation of armed forces that are respectful of state institutions, human rights and the principles of the rule of law. For both, it has allowed the strengthening of their bilateral and multilateral relations within the CPLP (Portugal, 2013)<sup>43</sup>.

Let us now analyse military-technical cooperation between Portugal and East Timor aimed at security sector reform in the area of defence during the period from 2001 to 2016.

In bilateral terms, the first defence cooperation agreement between Portugal and East Timor was signed in Dili on May 20, 2002, nine days after East Timor was constituted as an independent State, designed to strengthen existing ties of friendship and fraternity, as well as broaden and deepen relations of cooperation in the field of defence. However, Portugal had already been participating in the defence reform process since January 2001, within the framework of SSR for East Timor, especially in the

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41 COTTEY, A.; FOSTER, A. *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*, London: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 5-8.

42 PINTO, Luís Valença. «A cooperação técnico-militar portuguesa», revista *Janus* 2013. Available at <[http://janusonline.pt/popups2013/2013\\_2\\_18.pdf](http://janusonline.pt/popups2013/2013_2_18.pdf)> [10 November 2016].

43 PORTUGAL. «Decree-Law no. 238/1996, 13 December. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the government of the Portuguese Republic no. 43/1999, 29 April 1999. Resolution of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic no. 5/2004, 13 January 2004. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the government of the Portuguese Republic no. 73/2009, 16 July 2009. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the government of the Portuguese Republic no. 19/2013, 21 March 2013».

initial process of setting up the F-FDTL. As a result of the cooperation agreements that were concluded, Framework Programmes<sup>44</sup> were established setting out the joint projects to be developed and the goals to be achieved within a three to four-year period. At multilateral level, defence agreements were concluded within the CPLP, in which both countries are full members and share cooperation objectives.

Thus, based on historical, cultural and common language roots, Portugal, contributes to the security and sustainable development of friendly countries, as well as world peace. Portugal's military-technical cooperation<sup>45</sup> in East Timor entails personnel training and technical advisory activities focused on human and institutional training, and has permitted the development of national military capabilities essential for the international projection of East Timor<sup>46</sup> (MDN, 2014).

As a result of the "International Donor Conference" to support the creation of the F-FDTL, held in Dili at the end of 2000, Portugal allocated financial resources, military goods and equipment, as well as specialised (military) personnel to participate in the selection and recruitment of human resources and the training and organisation of the international structure that would eventually become the F-FDTL. In terms of materiel, it is worth mentioning the donation of uniforms for 600 soldiers and two patrol boats of the "Albatross" class. The selection and recruitment process involved 1,700 Falintil volunteers, of whom almost 650 were selected and appointed to the F-FDTL 1st battalion, the naval component, General Staff personnel and the training unit whose headquarters were to be in Metinaro. Those not selected were offered UN-sponsored civilian retraining programmes, offering them a reinsertion grant of US \$ 200, a measure which ended up giving rise to security problems that remain entrenched in East Timor to this day ... But that is the subject for another investigation.

Military training commenced at the beginning of February 2001, after a ceremony to mark the dissolution of the Falintil held in Aileu, in the mountainous area of East Timor (a mythical place for the Falintil), on the previous January 29. The event, which was attended by top-level Timorese and international figures, marked the beginning of an unprecedented historical framework for the transformation of an unregulated resistance army into a conventional armed force. The process, under the supervision of Portugal, was developed in two phases and coordinated by the now extinct Practical School of Infantry (PSI)<sup>47</sup> with

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44 PQ: *Programas - Quadro*.

45 MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA NACIONAL DE PORTUGAL. *Anuário Estatístico de Defesa Nacional*, Lisbon, 2001-2012. A series of actions that simultaneously constitute a vector for the consolidation of the democratic system of the beneficiary countries through the organisation/constitution of a politically neutral Armed Force, guaranteeing the smooth operation of the institutions, and a vector for economic and social development through the formation of frameworks and the organisation of operational structures.

46 MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA NACIONAL DE PORTUGAL. «Programa-Quadro de Cooperação Técnico-Militar Luso-Timorense». Lisbon, 2014.

47 EPI: *Escola Prática de Infantaria*.

the active involvement of ten Portuguese soldiers as well as Australians, New Zealanders and South Koreans and with US support.

In the first phase, which took place at the Falintil cantonment site in Aileu, the 250 guerrillas preselected for the jobs of officer and non-commissioned officer received initial training as officers, during which almost ten candidates were rejected. Most of them were historical leaders of the Falintil and military with vast combat experience; therefore, it was necessary to teach them subjects related to military organisation and doctrine in order to implement a logic different from their previous experiences in times of guerrilla warfare. The average age of the ex-guerrillas was around forty, (the oldest was 56), many of whom bore the marks of past battles and the torture suffered. Immediate security was guaranteed by guerrillas from the four existing companies and reorganised on the basis of the previous hierarchical structure of the Falintil. Thus, a corps of 66 officers and 124 non-commissioned officers was created, who would assume command and control functions in the structure of the F-FDTL.

Graduation and appointments to the positions available were carried out in accordance with the proposals put forward by Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, Chief of Staff of the F-FDTL. In general, the previously existing hierarchy within the Falintil was respected, with due consideration given to the capabilities and achievements demonstrated during training, as well as other factors such as the age and health requirements of the Armed Forces, whose demands would have been quite different to those experienced in the guerrilla forces.

It was a process of inclusive transformation that made it possible to combine operational experience and the rewarding of self-denial previously demonstrated in the defence of the homeland with the knowledge acquired and demonstrated during the training process. Furthermore, it legitimised the F-FDTL's chain of command, structurally based on the former Falintil, while at the same time giving prestige and protection to those who for years had assumed the leadership of the armed struggle against the Timorese occupation. They could now see their efforts being acknowledged with the assignment of a relevant social role in the development of a professional Armed Force where they would have the possibility of contributing to the security and defence of the Timorese people and territory.

The process was not perfect; there were enormous difficulties for the Timorese political party, which was not prepared for such an intense transition, and for the international community that had to deal with a hugely challenging innovative process, and even for the military as they attempted to overcome logistical deficiencies and linguistic and cultural differences to bring to fruition a transformation admired by the whole world.

On this point, the Timorese military leaders were faithful to their organisational responsibilities, contributing greatly to the institutional and human development required to achieve peace and security as well as the peaceful integration of East Timor into the international system in accordance with democratic principles and with res-

pect for human rights, responding to commitments undertaken from the very outset of the process.

In the second phase in Metinaro, the Portuguese team provided advice regarding the training of the remaining 400 recruits assigned to the troops. In addition it lent its support to the creation of the structures of the F-FDTL Headquarters and General Staff in Dili, the training centre in Metinaro, and the embryo of the naval component, at the Hera base, comprising the first sixty of the expected final number of 600 soldiers (with the integration from then onwards of five members of the Portuguese Naval Corps in the training team); in a nutshell supporting the creation of the basic structure of what would become the F-FDTL.

Integrated into the military training process, the knowledge of the Portuguese language was encouraged from the beginning with classes given by teachers appointed by the Ministry of Education in coordination with the Portuguese Embassy in Dili. The purpose was to consolidate knowledge of one of the official languages of East Timor, a question by no means trivial in terms of affirming the identity of the F-FDTL ... since the language of the resistance had now become the working language in the training of the Armed Forces.

Training was adapted to local characteristics and needs, pursuing institutional training, progress and the improvement of technical and military conditions, ensuring respect for democratic principles and for the traditions and hierarchy maintained by Falintil. Of critical importance was the task of generating an awareness of their role as members of the Armed Forces of an emerging state in an international context, conscious of their responsibilities, their role in a democratic society and their commitment to the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The presence of the first Portuguese training team on Timorese soil came to an end on December 6, 2001, almost a year after their arrival, which symbolised the end of military training with the incorporation of the 1st battalion of the F-FDTL and the parade of that unit on the first of December at the Metinaro barracks before leading Timorese figures and high-level representatives of the UN administration. During this military parade ceremony, which symbolised at the same time the end of the Portuguese team mission, its members were distinguished by the F-FDTL command with the title of "Honorary Member of the Falintil -DEFENCE FORCES OF EAST TIMOR", which obviously symbolises so much more than possibly could be imagined ... for the military, for the Armed Forces, for Portugal and for East Timor.

In February 2002, Portugal sent a new team of trainers, also from the Practical Infantry School, which was maintained as the coordination body, and entrusted with task of recruiting and training the new members that would constitute the F-FDTL 2nd battalion.

On May 11, 2002 East Timor was internationally recognised as an independent country and nine days later it signed the first MTC agreement with Portugal. A historic date for both countries. East Timor thus witnessed the recognition of the efforts of its people and the Falintil, which for almost 24 years had led an armed struggle against

the Indonesian occupation. Portugal, on the other hand, saw its diplomatic efforts on the Timorese question recognised by the international community<sup>48</sup>.

From this first agreement resulted two Cadre Programmes which included five cooperation projects:

- Project 1\_ Support for the organisation and creation of the legislative base of the higher Defence and F-FDTL structures, and sectoral advice to the National Defence and the F-FDTL Command and Staff.
- Project 2\_ Support for the organisation of the naval component and the Hera Naval Base, providing technical training to the garrisons of the “Albatros” launches.
- Project 3\_ Support for the organisation of the terrestrial component and of the Metinaro Instruction Centre as well as the general training of the F-FDTL contingent.
- Project 4\_ Training of F-FDTL cadres, support for the training of officers and non-commissioned officers (since no specific body was created for this project, its objectives were included in project 3)
- Project 5\_ Training in Portugal, in units, establishments and military training centres, at the Institute of Advanced Military Higher Studies (IAEM) and at the National Defence Institute (NDI)<sup>49</sup>.

For that purpose, Portugal sent some 300 military personnel to East Timor up to the end of 2014 who conducted regular training courses as well as promotional and advanced level courses to over 6000<sup>50</sup> F-FDTL soldiers. East Timor sent up to fifty members of the F-FDTL to Portugal between 2006 and 2011, where they received training in different bodies and venues<sup>51</sup>.

In 2011, a new cooperation agreement was signed expanding defence relations, including the integration of F-FDTL soldiers into Portuguese contingents posted abroad in peace missions under the auspices of the UN, and the joint development of projects in the fields of defence economics and maritime issues<sup>52</sup>. This agreement would result in a new cadre programme with new cooperation projects, in particular support for the creation of the of the President of the Republic’s Military Headquarters, support

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48 JUNQUEIRA, João P. R.; PIRES, Rui M. S. *O Exército nos trilhos da Cooperação*, Lisboa: Secção de Cooperação Militar e Alianças do Gabinete do General Chefe do Estado-Maior do Exército, 2009, p. 120.

49 IAEM: *Instituto de Altos Estudos Militares*; IDN: *Instituto da Defesa Nacional*.

50 This approximate number refers to the members of the military present in the different CTM, activities, with some F-FDTL members participating in more than one form of instruction: promotional, upgrading or refresher training courses.

51 MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA NACIONAL DE PORTUGAL. *Anuário Estatístico de Defesa Nacional*, Lisbon, 2001-2014.

52 PORTUGAL. «Resolution of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic no. 111/2012». Lisbon, 8 June 2012.

for the F-FDTL's Operational Command, and support for the development of military engineering. In this context, in 2012, a contingent of eleven F-FDTL soldiers participated for the first time in a UN mission (UNIFIL, Lebanon) as part of a battalion of Portuguese engineers<sup>53</sup>.

This strategic cooperation programme has, in our view, allowed Portugal to demonstrate a certain capacity for leadership, flexibility and the ability to adapt its structures in the performance of military operations, incorporating soldiers from friendly countries in a multinational environment, in favour of peace. For East Timor, in turn, it has allowed it to show the international community its commitment to peacebuilding as well as the ability of its military to integrate into multinational structures acting in a combined environment in pursuit of international peace and security, boosted by cooperation between the two states in the field of defence. Both countries have been able to demonstrate to the international community that their cooperation, in particular in the military-technical field, has generated relationships of trust between the different actors involved in the training processes, in the human, technical, operational and institutional aspects of the F-FDTL. This finding is of particular importance in determining the preference and behaviour of the states in the election of their strategic partners for development and security support.

The cooperation agreement was signed in mid-2014 and is currently in the execution phase. It contemplates six MTC projects: the establishment of a Joint Coordination Nucleus for advising the upper echelons of National Defence and the F-FDTL, the training of the East Timor National Defence Institute, the improvements to the functioning of the F-FDTL's training and instruction component, the development of the operational capacity of the naval component and terrestrial components, and the programming of a new military education cycle to be developed in Portugal for the training of F-FDTL cadres. Thus, it is clear that the mutual willingness of Portugal and East Timor to maintain MTC as a strategic vector of its bilateral relations in the field of defence has also had positive consequences at a multilateral level, with special emphasis on the CPLP, a fundamental instrument in the pursuit of the common interests of Portugal and East Timor<sup>54</sup>.

At a multilateral level, the two states participate in activities of military cooperation within the framework of the CPLP aimed at sharing knowledge and promoting cooperation among the members of the community in the defence sector. The member countries participate in an annual "FELINO" military exercise to promote the preparation and training of joint forces to carry out UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance<sup>55</sup>. This is a demonstration of the common interests of the

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53 COSTA, Rui P. B. M. «Entrevista con el Jefe de la Unidad de Ingenieros 11 en UNIFIL en 2012». Tomar, 2014.

54 MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA NACIONAL DE PORTUGAL. «Programa - Quadro de Cooperação Técnico-Militar Luso-Timorense». Lisbon, 2014.

55 COMUNIDADE DE PAÍSES DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA: CPLP. «Protocolo de Cooperação da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa no Domínio da Defesa». Cidade da Praia, 2006.

members of the CPLP, a common strategy for the promotion of peace and security, democracy, human rights and sustainable development, since without security there can be no development and without development there can be no security.

The increasing participation in the activities of the Portuguese speaking Community and the presence of East Timor in CPLP structures are a clear signal that the process of F-FDTL training, with the solid, constant and structured support of Portugal has been a successful process from the outset, the result of which, after almost 15 years, is none other than the existence of the present-day Armed Forces of East Timor.

These Armed Forces have become an organised state institution, producing domestic and external security, the guarantor of national sovereignty through the deployment of checkpoints and the execution of patrols on the border with Indonesia; projecting the external image of the State of East Timor, with the participation of its military in a Portuguese contingent in a UN-led mission in Lebanon; participating in domestic security operations, in accordance with Timorese legislation, coordinating with the National Police (PNTL)<sup>56</sup>, as demonstrated by their performance during the 2012 elections, as well as in various domestic disturbances in which they were called to intervene; conducting training and operational training activities, even participating in exercises in a multinational environment; a force which, in a nutshell, represents a success story, worthy of praise, in which a guerrilla force, by opting for its transformation into a conventional force, has become a professional, operational, credible Armed Force capable of collaborating in the defence of the Timorese people and territory, subordinate to state democratic institutions and endowed with a spirit of political neutrality in accordance with the principles of its legislative body.

The credibility within the Timorese civil society earned by the members of the Falintil during the period of the armed struggle, as well as the preference shown for the aid of the Portuguese military are perhaps two of the main ingredients of the success of this process, combined with the willingness of the Portuguese political and military leaders to assist East Timor in a pioneering initiative on the international stage. It is clear that there is still a long way to go before achieving the complete autonomy of the F-FDTL; However, progress in human and institutional training observed thus far is indicative of the Timorese effort to professionalise its Armed Forces within the framework of SSR and RSD programmes, together with Portuguese support in matters of defence and the transformation of an unregulated army into a conventional Armed Force, subordinate to the organs of democratic and legitimate sovereignty with the capacity to contribute to national development and national, regional and international peace and security efforts, as well as the integration of East Timor into the international system.

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56 PNTL: *National Police Timor Leste*.

## CONCLUSIONS

The task of (re) building a country in a post-conflict situation is a complex process that requires the participation of different actors and agents, something that has not been an exception in the formation of East Timor after the year 2000. For Brahimi<sup>57</sup> it is not an exact science or an inflexible and stereotyped model. Therefore, it is essential that the processes involved are inclusive and that external support is programmed and adjusted to emerging local needs in search of a lasting liberal peace, sustained development, institutional capacity-building and human progress.

Throughout this article we have reflected on Portugal's main contributions to the transformation and development of the Falintil into the F-FDTL between 2000 and 2015. To that end we believe that Portuguese foreign policy has supported the construction of the State of East Timor, especially in the field of defence, through the conclusion of MTC agreements.

The defence sector has benefited from this support with MTC activities framed within the SSR. To achieve this goal, in addition to the aforementioned bibliography, various official documents, reports by the Portuguese technical advisory services, and data compiled at the General Directorate of National Defence Policy of Portugal and from the Portuguese Army Chief of Staff. Officials were also interviewed, both from the Portuguese Army and from the F-FDTL, who participated in the process of transforming the Falintil into the F-FDTL, as well as the personal experience of the authors, who participated in this process in the initial period (2001) and, subsequently, over 15 years.

This paper aims to demonstrate that Portugal's continued and substantial support in the construction of the East Timor State has been adjusted to its emerging needs in a manner that favours the consolidation of the defence sector. It also seeks to show that MTC activities carried out by the Portuguese military, in particular the training and development of human resources and the institutional consolidation of the F-FDTL have contributed to the SSR and DSR of East Timor and, unquestionably, to the future of its Armed Forces.

At a theoretical level, it has been widely demonstrated that relations between states manifest the preference of individuals and society; that the official representatives of the state act consciously defining state preferences; that the interdependent preferences of states determine their behaviour, since cooperation among states relies on common interests, favouring international institutions, cooperation and the promotion of a state of lasting peace.

On the diplomatic front, Portugal has spared no effort in drawing the attention of the international community to the issue of East Timor; on the military level, it

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57 BRAHIMI, Lakhdar. «State-building in Crisis and Pos-Conflict Countries», Austria: 7<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on Reinventing Government 2007.

continues to show unconditional support for the construction of the State of East Timor, especially in the field of Defence. In particular, with the insertion of Timorese military personnel in national contingents participating in UN-sponsored missions (Lebanon), Portugal has facilitated the projection of the image of Timor at international level, the image of a state committed to international peace and security.

This has contributed to the perception of the dynamics and the benefits of Portuguese military cooperation in DSR, framed within the SSR of East Timor. This cooperation has been made possible thanks to Portugal's foreign policy in support of the construction of the State of East Timor, defining it as one of its main political-strategic priorities ... Long may this continue...

Lisbon, 25 May 2018

Luís Manuel Brás Bernardino<sup>58</sup> y Álvaro António Moreira dos Santos<sup>59</sup>

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