

East Timor under the Indonesian jackboot

Occasional Report No. 26, Oct 98

An Analysis of Indonesian Army Documents

In October 1998 a large number of Indonesian army documents found their way out of East Timor and landed on the desk of an East Timor solidarity activist in Australia. The documents, in total more than 100 pages, consist of numerous tables containing details of military personnel in East Timor and covering many aspects of the army's presence in the occupied country. They provide, for the first time ever, a comprehensive picture of the precise nature of the army's structure in the territory and the extent and depth of its penetration of East Timorese political, economic and social life. The documents originate from the Territorial Military Command IX Udayana, based in Den Pasar, Bali. The Regional Military Command in East Timor, Korem 164, falls under the command of the Udayana Military Command. No one, not even military spokesmen, has sought to claim that the documents are not authentic. Press reports have all quoted 'diplomatic sources' as confirming their authenticity.

In general, they confirm what we have known for many years, that East Timor is a heavily militarised country where the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) exercise a tight grip on the everyday lives of the East Timorese people. They prove that ABRI regard East Timor as a place where they must maintain a pervasive and deep-rooted military presence to deal with people living in the towns, the countryside and in the bush, the vast majority of whom are totally opposed to the occupation.

The documents also prove conclusively that:

- contrary to claims by the military and civilian authorities that the number of troops in East Timor has been reduced this year, the number has actually increased,
- contrary to claims that combat troops in East Timor have been greatly reduced and are being phased out altogether, combat troops have increased in number and amount to nearly 40 per cent of the total number of troops in the territory,
- the civil defence, Hansip or Pertahanan Sipil units which are clearly a key element in the control of East Timorese society, is barely mentioned in the documents; they are not part of ABRI but fall under the Department of Home Affairs, the most militarised department. ABRI provides the training, usually retired officers, and also supplies Hansip units with their weaponry. Hansip is the recruiting ground for Timorese members of ABRI,
- that the para-military forces in East Timor are under the direct command of ABRI and are not an independent force of vigilantes outside the command structure as is usually claimed, and finally
- that army personnel occupy all the key posts within the civilian administration, giving them control over the political, economic and social life of the occupied country.

The number of troops

The tables show that in August this year, the number of troops in East Timor amounted to 17,941 if only regular soldiers are included. The figure rises to 21,620 if we include the armed and trained military personnel from the ranks of civil servants and the so-called wanra or 'people's resistance' units.

Since the beginning of Suharto's New Order, the Indonesian state has been heavily militarised. However, the figures show that militarisation of East Timor far exceeds Indonesia as a whole. In 1995, ABRI consisted of 507,137 men for a population of around 200 million, roughly 2,500 troops for one million inhabitants. The ratio in East Timor is nearly 18,000 regular soldiers for less than a million people or even higher as a ratio of the East Timorese people who currently amount to probably no more than 700,000. Put another way, whereas in Indonesia as a whole, there was roughly one member of the armed forces for 400 Indonesians, in East Timor, the ratio is seven times as high - one member for every 56 inhabitants of East Timor.

The composition of the troops

The key tables entitled 'Recapitulation of organik and penugasan personnel forces' divide the troops into two categories, organik or territorial troops who are stationed in the territory on a semi-permanent (usually three months or longer) basis, and penugasan or troops deployed from outside the territory for special duties, ie combat troops which are brought in to fight the guerrillas in the bush and quell the rebellious population in the towns and villages.

The documents in our possession include tables of these two types of troops for November and December 1997 and for July, early August and August this year; tables for the months in between are missing. They might have been helpful to show whether the downfall of Suharto in May this year affected the figures.

The tables show that there has been a marked increase in combat troops with territorial troops remaining almost constant:

November 1997:		
9,740 organik troops	6,172 penugasan troops	Total: 15,912
July 1998:		
9,896 organik troops	7,938 penugasan troops	Total: 17,834
August 1998:		
9,976 organik troops	7,938 penugasan troops	Total: 17,941

that is to say, an increase from November 1997 to August 1998 of 2,029 troops or an increase of 11.3 per cent.

The above figures are for 'August' not 'early August'. The distinction is important because the armed forces invited the foreign press to witness the departure of troops from East Timor on 28 July and announced further reductions in early August, claiming that this had led to a reduction in the number of combat troops. Foreign Minister Ali Alatas alleged in late October that '1,300 battle troops have been withdrawn from East Timor' and that of those remaining 'almost one hundred percent are territorial troops who do not fight but help people in agriculture, road and bridge development' [Reuters, 28 October 1998]. As we can see, there was an increase not a reduction over the period and even a slight increase in August over July. It goes without saying that all the talk about helping people in agriculture and development is a nothing more than a smoke-screen.

The same tables also include figures for 'non-ABRI' forces itemised as 'civil servants' and 'people's resistance' or wanra forces. While almost all the 'civil servant' forces were attached to the territorial troops, more than 60 per cent of the wanra troops were attached to the combat troops (see below). In the Indonesian army's defence structure, the entire population is held to be responsible for defence and security in the form of civil defence (hansip or pertahanan sipil) which consists of wanra and public order units as well as militia (ratih, rakyat terlatih or 'trained people'). There is no mention in the documents of ratih or civil defence hansip.

Taken together, these 'non-ABRI' forces were just under 4,000 and remained virtually unchanged over the nine-month period. These men are armed personnel who are trained for military duty. Although the tables give no hint of the ethnic composition of these forces, it is likely that a sizeable number consist of immigrant Indonesians. These additional forces brought the total for the three months to:

November 1997	- 19,933
July 1998	- 21,540
August 1998	- 21,620

Incidentally, medical corps personnel, scores of whom were alleged to have been brought in to replace the departing combat troops in August amounted to no more than 84 persons.

Separate tables for each of the months give breakdowns of organik and penugasan troops. The breakdown in August 1998 for organik troops show that 4,385 men were attached to the thirteen Kodims or district military commands; the largest kodims were in Baucau (615 men), Lospalos (436 men) and Manatuto (416 men). Police forces spread out to the thirteen districts amounted in all to 2,925 men, with the largest number located at police HQ in Dili (578) and in the Dili (355), Baucau (210) and Bobonaro (204) police commands.

The other major contingent of organik troops are Battalions 744 and 745 with a sizeable number of East Timorese. However, all the command positions down to platoon level (a platoon consists of up to 15 men) are in the hands of Indonesian officers. According to East Timorese sources, this pattern was introduced following desertions by many East Timorese officers holding positions of command in the 1980s. Battalions 744 and 745 were originally not part of the territorial military structure in East Timor. The first digit, 7, indicates that the battalions were originally part of Military Command VII/Wirabuana based in Ujung Pandang, Sulawesi. Their connection with Sulawesi now appears to have been severed.

Back in 1978, the provincial administration of East Timor was run by the Defence Department in Jakarta [see also section on ABRI's domination in the civilian administration] while the military structure was directly answerable to

Jakarta. In 1978 a special operational command called Koopskam was set up for East Timor, under the direct supervision of ABRI headquarters. Being a special military project with continuing military operations, troops were dispatched to East Timor from all parts of the archipelago, a tradition which continues to this day. In 1989 Koopskam was re-named Kolakops, with the Dili military commander concurrently holding the post of Kolakops commander. After the Santa Cruz massacre when international pressure reached a new pitch, Kolakops was scrapped and East Timor became a regular resort military command or Korem 164/Wira Dharma. under the military command in Bali. However this turns out to have been a cosmetic change as large numbers of penugasan troops continue to be deployed in the colony.

The breakdown of the penugasan troops in August was as follows:

They include five infantry battalions, each of around 985 men, from various parts of Indonesia. Battalions 315 (from West Java), 401 (from Central Java) 512 (from East Java) , 642 (from Kalimantan) and 144 (from North Sumatra).

The other sizeable contingents are:

Satgas Darat or 'special duty land forces'	1,458
Satgas Tribuana consisting of Kopassus commandos	503
Satgas Zipur or 'special duty engineers'	150

We can draw several important conclusions about the Satgas Tribuana troops:

1. By far the largest number of wanra forces are attached to Satgas Tribuana units, bringing the total to 1,703 and making it the largest single contingent of penugasan troops.
2. The Kopassus units listed (Parako or para-komando 8 and 9 in July 1998 and Parako 6 and 7 in August 1998) are known to be trainee units, which confirms the belief that East Timor is used as a training ground for the army's elite troops.
3. The fact that there was a switch round in Parako troops between July and August confirms reports that the troops which departed on 28 July in a blaze of publicity were replaced by other elite troops a few days later.

There is no mention in any of the documents about the existence of Menwa the student regiments that exist in all universities throughout Indonesia. These units which function under the instructions, and receive training from, the local military commands, have the task of keeping a close watch on their fellow students. We know for certain that there is a Menwa with about three hundred members in the University of East Timor (UNTIM), whose members include both Indonesian and Timorese students.

Brimob, the riot police

The role of the police force has increased in the past few years, in particular the role of Brimob (Brigade Mobil, Mobile Brigade), a special police task force in charge of riot control. In order to bolster the image of East Timor, the Suharto government announced some years ago that the role of the army would be reduced and the police used more widely for maintaining public order. It was now the task of the police to deal with the burgeoning protest movement of youngsters on the streets of Dili and Baucau. Brimob personnel are trained to deal with mass demonstrations and equipped with weaponry such as water cannon, armoured personal carriers and high-tech communications equipment. In major cities throughout Indonesia Brimob have been responsible for much of the brutality against peaceful protesters, a role that they have replicated in East Timor.

The Brimob units deployed in East Timor are subdivided into organik and penugasan units. We see from the documents that more than a thousand Brimob personnel are stationed in East Timor. One of the documents dated August 1998 reveals that the organik troops included Brimob Company 5486 consisting of 633 men. The penugasan troops include three Brimob companies, Brimob Company 5127 from North Sumatra (121 men), Brimob Company 5135 from Riau (128 men) and Brimob Company 5151 from Palembang (131 men), bringing the total of Brimob troops in East Timor to 1,013 men. Fresh Brimob companies continue to arrive in East Timor. At the end of October, three Brimob companies arrived from Bali and Kalimantan 'to help maintain civil order' [AFP, 28 October 1998]. We have no way of knowing whether they were replacing other Brimob troops but it is undoubtedly true that nowhere in Indonesia is there such a high concentration of riot police per head of the population as in East Timor.

The army's presence in every village

One document lists the names of all the babinsa or non-commissioned officers who are stationed in each village, a total of 464 officers. According to East Timor in Figures published by Bappeda and the Bureau of Statistics in 1997, there were 442 villages in East Timor in November 1996. The discrepancy between the two figures may be accounted for by new settlements established since then. With a babinsa post in every village, grassroots surveillance of the population is far more intense in East Timor than in Indonesia where as a rule each babinsa post covers a group of villages.

Most of the babinsa appear to be Timorese, though some names suggest that they are from West not East Timor.

Babinsa officers are regarded as the 'eyes and ears' of the occupation forces, collecting intelligence on a regular basis. By using Timorese, ABRI aim to set Timorese against Timorese in line with the classic colonial policy of 'divide and rule', relying on a spying network which should work more effectively than if Indonesian soldiers were used, further intensifying the population's hatred for the occupiers. However, this is likely to be a weak link, since many Timorese babinsas may share the sentiments of the villagers who they supervise.

East Timorese members of ABRI

The armed forces have sought to emphasise their success in recruiting many East Timorese into the armed forces. All ABRI passing out ceremonies at which Timorese graduate invariably turn the spotlight on these men.

There are five tables dealing with East Timorese members of ABRI. Several points of are interest:

Timorese soldiers in the lower ranks only

One table dated 1 August 1998 gives a breakdown of East Timorese members of the armed forces according to rank. There is not a single East Timorese above the rank of major whereas the three majors are all 'ex-Tropas', former members of the Portuguese army which was disbanded in 1975. They are more than likely to be well above active-service age. In any case, they are not located in East Timor. The other East Timorese officers consist of:

four captains; five first lieutenants; fifteen second lieutenants; four assistant first lieutenants; three assistant second lieutenants; 46 sergeant majors; 79 top sergeants; 134 first sergeants; and 299 second sergeants.

The remainder are corporals or privates who account for 5,505 out of the 6,095 East Timorese members of ABRI, more than 90 per cent of the total.

This is hardly a record to be proud of after 23 years of recruitment efforts. Many East Timorese who trained as officers are known to have deserted over the years, in most cases joining the ranks of the armed resistance.

The two 'Timorese' battalions

Battalions 744 and 745 are always referred to as 'East Timorese battalions'. However, several tables dated 1 August 1998 reveal that fewer than one third of these battalions are East Timorese, as the following figures show:

Battalion 744: 609 men of whom 181 are East Timorese

East Timorese officers	0	Indonesian officers	20
East Timorese NCOs	39	Indonesian NCOs	70

Battalion 745: 663 men of whom 171 are East Timorese

East Timorese officers	0	Indonesian officers	27
East Timorese NCOs	32	Indonesian NCOs	94

Battalions 744 and 745 are also much smaller than the normal size for army battalions which usually consist of between 950 and 1,000 men. The two battalions were set up in the early 1980s with members mostly recruited from East Timorese hansips. However many officers later deserted, after turning on their 'battalion comrades'.

Battalion 745 is based in Los Palos and Battalion 744 is based in Baucau.

Apart from the 1,272 members of the two 'Timorese' battalions, Timorese soldiers are spread out among the territorial troops stationed in the thirteen districts of East Timor, along with the more than 400 East Timorese babinsas who are under the command of the 13 district military commands.

We can conclude that:

1. The smaller size of the two 'Timorese' battalions reflects ABRI's inability to recruit enough East Timorese to create normal-sized battalions.
2. The majority of East Timorese members of ABRI are not concentrated in the so-called 'East Timorese battalions' but are spread out under various commands.
3. That the forces of occupation regard the Timorese under arms as a security risk and prefer them to be diffused among Indonesian soldiers rather than concentrated in two battalions.

Para-military teams

The para-military teams which figure so aggressively in intelligence operations, spying on and helping to capture suspects, are listed in a separate document headed: 'Resistance Forces in the Province of East Timor for 1997/1998'. Although no light is shed on the ethnic composition of these teams, they are likely to include a large number of Timorese. They function as counter-insurgency forces, creating an atmosphere of fear among the population and spreading instability. The teams work closely with the intelligence units of the elite forces, Kopassus, known as the SGI, whose brutal methods of interrogation and torture are widely feared in East Timor.

It is an integral part of the Indonesian army's doctrine to recruit members of the community to serve the interests of the armed forces in so-called 'people's defence'. This explains the use of the term 'resistance forces' for these insidious units set up to spy on and harass their fellow-countrymen. East Timor has always been an extreme example of ABRI policies. In East Timor, 'people's defence' is aimed at pitting Timorese against Timorese in an attempt to undermine the resistance of the East Timorese people.

Like every other document in the set, this is an official document of Korem 164, under the IX Regional Military Command, nailing the lie that these para-military forces are not incorporated as a part of ABRI but are 'independently managed' vigilante units.

The twelve teams listed are:

- Two Saka Baucau Teams
- Alfa Lospalos Team
- Makikit Viqueque Team
- Halilintar Atabae Team
- Railakan Ermera Team
- Ainaro Team
- Suai Team
- Same Team
- Sakunar Team
- Morok Manatuto Team
- Liquisa Team

In other words, there is a para-military team for almost every one of the thirteen districts in East Timor.

There is no mention of what is thought to be the largest and most infamous para-military group, Gadapaksi. Gadapaksi is the brain-child of former Kopassus commander Lt.General Prabowo, financed from his private funds. Prabowo's recent fall from grace may explain why loyalties are shifting. Recently, some Gadapaksi hirelings were reported to have joined in calls for the resignation of the governor, Osorio Soares, one of Prabowo's closest cronies.

The 13th item on the list of 'resistance forces' consists of 54 'respected citizens and local leaders'. These can be none other than the traditional or informal leaders, possibly including some pro-Indonesian priests. Their inclusion as 'resistance forces' confirms that the forces of occupation are always trying to rally traditional leaders so as to bolster their control over the community at large. These traditional leaders may also be relied on to 'nurture' members of the para-military teams.

Altogether there are 1,188 para-militaries. The death toll is striking: eleven team members were killed in action (gugur) during the period in question, which suggests that the teams are also used in armed conflict with the guerrillas.

ABRI's domination of the civil administration

One document dated August 1998 lists 140 executive and legislative posts which are held by members of ABRI, the so-called karyawan appointments. These reflect the implementation of ABRI's dwifungsi or dual function doctrine.

Altogether 83 top executive posts are held by ABRI officers, while 57 officers are members of the first and second-level assemblies (DPRD-I and 13 DPRD-II assemblies). These army assembly members are not elected but are appointed to hold seats set aside for the armed forces, four in each of the DPRD-II assemblies and nine in the DPRD-I assembly. As in all regional and district assemblies throughout Indonesia as well as in the national Parliament, the army officers are there to keep control over the activities and decisions of these rubber-stamp legislatures.

As for the executive posts, nineteen key posts are held by karyawan appointees in the first-level regional administration for East Timor (Dati-I), and 64 in the second-level or district (Dati-II) administrations.

The following Dati-I posts are held by army officers:

A

Deputy-governor
Two assistance governors

B

Head, Social-Political Directorate
Chief, Provincial HQ of Civil Defence
Head, BP-7, the State Ideology Directorate
Head, Provincial Inspectorate
Head, Sub-Directorate for Security of the Social-Political Directorate
Head, Educational Department of the BP-7
Head, Public Order Sub-Directorate of the Social-Political Directorate
Head, Communications Office
Commander, Pamong Praja Political Unit which oversees the appointment and conduct of local government officials known as Pamong Praja
Head of BIA's [army intelligence] Social-Political Affairs Inspector for civil servants.

C

Head, Trade and Industry Directorate
Head, Co-operative Affairs Directorate
Head, Regional Logistics Board
Director, Regional Development Bank

D

Head, Provincial Planning Board - Bappeda
Secretary, Provincial Planning Board - Bappeda

The array of army officers holding key regional administration posts is part and parcel of the way in which the forces of occupation manage Indonesia's colonial territory through effective control of the population and resources. As Rui Gomes who, until his defection in 1997 was Head of Research at East Timor Regional Planning Board, told TAPOL, 'the kitchen must be rigorously controlled by means of a system which manages all the colony's physical and human resources'.

Ten of the posts grouped under B above place army officers in strategic positions to exercise control over the populace. They are placed at the head of a range of offices which penetrate down to the lowest levels of society, whose officials have powers to control people in the conduct of their everyday lives and oversee indoctrination. For example, according to Rui Gomes, the Communications Office keeps tabs on all official correspondence between the province and Jakarta, it handles the affairs and vets the East Timorese given scholarships at Indonesian universities or sent on missions abroad and handles the trips to Indonesia or overseas of all local government officials.

Four of the posts grouped under C, the chiefs of trade and industry, co-operatives, and the logistics agency and the director of the Regional Development Bank are in a strategic position to control all the colony's economic and commercial activities and safeguard the financial resources of army-related business activities, in other words the patronage network for army officers and hangers-on.

The head and secretary of the Regional Planning Board - Bappeda - (group D) occupy the strategic positions from which to control the use of resources and ensure that the proceeds of projects are distributed 'fairly' among officers, officials and business enterprises in East Timor and Jakarta. As a rule, all projects requiring more than Rp. 500 million are assigned to businesses in Java as businesses in East Timor are unable to provide the necessary capital. Bappeda has the power to allocate these projects. These are the executives who determine which funding agencies may operate in East Timor, the types of building projects, and the listing of 'poor villages' which is a way of acquiring additional funds from the centre.

The deputy governor shadows the governor, a post which for political reasons has always been occupied by an East Timorese. Just as the governor has always been Timorese, so his deputy has always been a senior-ranking military man. Until May 1998, the deputy-governor was Brig-General Haribowo who served in the position for ten years. Haribowo is one of the longest-serving officers in East Timor, having served there for fourteen years. The assistant governors are on hand to ensure that documents relating to the running of the colony are speedily handled and duly signed by the governor; in other words, they must ensure the smooth running of the governor's office to safeguard the vested interests of military and non-military Indonesians.

The 64 Dati-II karyawan appointees include three district heads (bupati), three district secretaries, 13 heads of social-political departments (one for each district), two staff members of social-political departments, 11 heads of district civil defence offices, 31 village heads, and one head of a district co-operative department.

These karyawan executives function as an extension of the military establishment and remain firmly under military discipline. Moreover, although they wear civilian dress, they do not treat their co-workers as equals and expect, and receive, the deference due to army personnel. Their presence is a constant source of friction and fear in the civilian offices which they oversee.

The following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Ten of the thirteen district head posts are occupied by East Timorese. Visiting journalists and diplomats are expected to be duly impressed by the fact that these positions are entrusted to Timorese.
2. Political and social control in all districts is however in the hands of karyawan officers through the 'sos-pol' offices in every district. 'Sos-pol' heads at all levels of the civil administration in Indonesia, from departmental ministries down, are invariably occupied by active-service or retired ABRI officers in order to assert control through the karyawan mechanism of ABRI's dual function.
3. Surprisingly, there are 31 karyawan village heads, positions which, one would have thought, would always be held by East Timorese. The 31 villages are not identified but it is safe to assume that they are in highly sensitive regions where the security situation is particularly unsafe for the forces of occupation.
4. ABRI could lose most of their karyawan positions in East Timor if the Habibie/Alatas duo go ahead with their offer of autonomy for East Timor. In the Indonesian version of autonomy, all the key positions in the administration should logically be filled by East Timorese which means ABRI will lose a lot of the iron grip they hold over East Timor.

To sum up, the documents show convincingly that army penetration of the provincial and local administration in East Timor is overwhelming. The military's dwifungsi doctrine is enforced with particular vigour in Indonesia's colony of East Timor. It is not enough to call for the withdrawal of all Indonesian troops from East Timor. We must also call for the demilitarisation of the civil administration and the removal of all army appointees holding executive and legislative positions.

Written by Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong of TAPOL, with thanks to George Aditjondro for his comments on the documents transcribed by Andrew McNaughtan, and additional comments by Rui Gomes and John Roosa.

A printed copy of this report can be obtained from Tapol for £1.50 (in Europe), and £2.00 (outside Europe).