POLITICAL COMMITTEE
STUDY GUIDES

by the Committee Directors
Dear ACMUN Delegates,

The study guides that follow are written by the directors of your committee in order to help you in your preparation for the conference. Remember that your own research on the topic area and your country’s policy is essential. The main purpose of this document is, as its name suggests, to simply guide you in your personal research.

Each delegate should come to the conference with a working paper for each topic area. In brief, a working paper is a one-page list of proposals addressing the different aspects of the problem, in accordance with the position of the delegate’s country on the issue. For more information on preparation and the rules and procedures of the conference, please consult the online Delegate Preparation Guide. Also, keep in mind that the directors are more than willing to answer any questions you may have, which you can send to the email addresses provided.

I hope that you will benefit from reading these well prepared and thorough study guides.

Sincerely,

Argyris Tsiaras
Secretary-General

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2nd Anatolia College MUN! My name is Vasilis Ameranis and I am honored to be the Director of the Political Committee. I am a student of the 11th grade in the German School of Athens (DSA) and this will be my 9th MUN overall and my 2nd as student officer. I was born in Athens in 1990, and, although I have lived for 8 years in Thessalonika I now live in Athens again. In my free time I play guitar, fight with my younger brothers and read literature. I have prepared the guide on the 1st topic of the political committee “The Situation of Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security”. It contains a small analysis on the history of the problem, the current situation and the questions your resolution must answer. So, have fun while working for your resolutions and I wish you all a great conference in Thessaloniki!

Vasilis Ameranis
Director
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Dear delegates of the Political Committee,

My name is Alexander Beltes and I am a junior (11th grade) at the IB program of Anatolia college. I attended grammar school at Pinewood International Schools and gymnasium at Anatolia. I am bilingual (my mother is from Rhode Island, USA) but I have lived in Greece my whole life. I have attended four MUN conferences (3rd and 4th TMUN, DSAMUN 2006, and 9th AMUN) as a delegate for Egypt, Rwanda, Armenia, and ambassador of Lebanon, respectively. It will be my first time as a chair of a committee in an MUN conference.

Alexander Beltes
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# Political Committee

## Topic Area A

The Situation of Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Situation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloc Positions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions a Resolution Must Answer</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for further research</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Topic Area B

The Question of East Timor (Timor-Leste)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of the Problem</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Situation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloc Positions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions a Resolution Must Answer</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for further research</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOPIC AREA A

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Afghanistan is a key-country for international security. The greatest trading routes for the region pass through its territory, and thus Afghanistan is the most significant country, the domino which, if it falls, may lead to a global crisis. Therefore it is vital for the whole region to stabilize the situation, as any problem in the exportation of products from central Asia will cause a global crisis. We have to see the problem as a whole; international security will be secured only if both measures concerning the internal situation in Afghanistan as well as measures for the stabilization of the whole region are combined in order to provide an end to the destabilization. This is very difficult as problems like the Iranian nuclear program or the Israel-Palestine conflict are very complicated. In Afghanistan the most serious problem are the guerrilla fighters that, with the support of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, attack the NATO peacekeeping forces. Several warlords are now fighting with each other and thus a civil war has not yet been avoided. Furthermore dozens of civilians are killed in these clashes and a humanitarian crisis is also very close. The situation gets more complicated, as Pakistan is accused of providing a safe heaven to rebels, who cross its borders and attack the NATO troops.

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

The crisis in the region is dated back to the 1980’s. The King of Afghanistan, Muhammed Zahir Shah followed a Soviet-Union-friendly policy. A coup deposed him and his cousin, Mohammed Daoud, declared Afghanistan a republic. The king went into exile in Italy. The political situation of Afghanistan was at that time chaotic, with tribes fighting against the central governments, rebellions and coups, as well as tribe fights. Between 1978 and 1979 radical political developments changed the situation. Daoud was killed in the 1978 coup by the Marxist rebels of Noor Taraki, who was also executed in September of 1979. The next president, Hafizullah Amin was killed in December of 1979 (only 3 months after his coup) as the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and installed Babrak Karmal as president.

The Soviet-Union-backed government at the beginning faced no problems, as the slight resistance was easily eliminated. Guerrilla fighters started a small-scale fight against the Soviets, but they were not well organized and armed. Those groups existed long before the soviet invasion as rebel armies, taking part in the coups and the rebellions against the central government. The soviet army easily faced these attempts.

At that time there was an attempt in the Security Council to pass a resolution that condemned the Soviet invasion but it failed due to the negative vote of the USSR. The matter was then taken up in the General Assembly which adopted the first of a series of ‘Situation in Afghanistan’ resolutions, in which it deplored the armed intervention in Afghanistan, called Soviet forces waving as they flee Afghanistan for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, asked States to contribute humanitarian assistance, and asked the Secretary-General to keep it informed of developments.

The situation in Afghanistan itself though started changing. The rebels, calling themselves mujahideen, pledged a jihad, meaning holy war, to expel the invaders. Their attempt was welcomed by
the USA, which trained and armed those forces with sophisticated anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles. Under these circumstances the Soviet army was engaged in a no-win conflict. In 1986 the president, Babrak Karmal, resigned and was replaced by Mohammad Najibullah. The USSR was now trapped and therefore it started negotiating with the USA and Pakistan. A treaty was signed, calling for an end to outside aid to the warring factions. In return, a Soviet withdrawal took place in Feb. 1989, but the pro-Soviet government of President Najibullah was left in the capital, Kabul.

From that point the government forces started to lose ground and inevitably the rebels entered the capital by mid-April 1992. Almost immediately, the various rebel groups began fighting one another for control. After clashes that lasted for 4 years a group of fundamental Islamists, calling themselves the Taliban, seized control of Kabul in Sept. 1996. This group follows the Shi’a, meaning the strictest version of Islamic law. Women are not allowed to show their faces in public or to walk without the guidance of a man. Quickly the Taliban gained control over the country and by fall 1998 they controlled about 90% of the country.

The Taliban administration turned itself into an international pariah; human rights abuses and the lack of communication, as well as the poor representation in international organizations have sharpened international isolation. The USA have suspected the Taliban of giving shelter to Al Qaeda, a terrorist group of fundamentalists that has been accused of attacks against the US embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania, attacks against US naval targets etc. Osama Bin Laden, the leader of the group was thought to live in Afghanistan.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which were organized by al-Qaeda, the USA decided to activate article 5 of the North Atlantic treaty, which calls all member states to consider an attack against one member as an attack against them. On Oct 7, the US troops started air-strikes against key-locations and supported the Northern alliance, a group of anti-Taliban rebels. They invaded the Taliban territories and with the active support of the US troops captured the capital, Kabul, within 5 weeks. Finally, by the end of the 2001 the Taliban administration had entirely collapsed. However, many guerrilla fighters, including members of al-Qaeda, as well as Osama bin Laden, retreated to the mountains, where they regrouped.

In Dec. 2001, Hamid Karzai, the leader of the powerful Populzai clan, was named head of Afghanistan’s interim government. In June 2002 he formally became president. Peacekeeping forces, led by NATO deployed in Afghanistan together with 12000 US-soldiers. Those forces were engaged in battles with the remaining Taliban. As the war against terrorism moved on in Iraq, security problems started escalating. The regrouped common forces of the Taliban and of al-Qaeda attacked the NATO forces, causing many casualties. This has caused the American troops to gradually rise from 12000 in 2001 to almost 18000 in 2006. Battles between the Taliban and the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force, the UN-mandated, NATO-led peacekeeping forces) have been harsh, with the NATO forces making only little progress in their effort to eliminate the Taliban resistance. NATO’s Afghanistan mission is considered the most dangerous undertaken in its 57-year history.

CURRENT SITUATION

The situation nowadays is rather complicated. The two main enemies (NATO forces and Taliban/al-Qaeda forces), as well as the civilians, play major roles in this conflict.

NATO forces

After the victory of the Northern Alliance, nearly 12000 American soldiers were deployed in Afghanistan. Their deployment took place under the umbrella of the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force), the NATO-led peacekeeping forces. The ISAF was created on 20 December by the Security Council’s resolution 1386, which defined the duties of the ISAF as to help the interim government to maintain security in Kabul and its surrounding areas. Right now there are in Afghanistan around 32000 soldiers. They come from 32 countries and they are assisted by the government forces. Those forces are mainly Afghans and the remains of the Northern Alliance forces.
The ongoing war in Afghanistan has questioned NATO’s military superiority. The Taliban forces, although they have not achieved any glorious victory have troubled the ISAF for quite a while. For the NATO coalition there is no possibility of losing Afghanistan, as this will mean the failure of the war against terrorism, the top priority in the USA agenda. A withdrawal from Afghanistan under these circumstances, for the USA (and their allies) is no choice, as it will leave chaos, a country much more dangerous than the Afghanistan before the US invasion. Then the Taliban were an international pariah, while today they are a symbol for the Islamic resistance against foreign forces. A withdrawal from Afghanistan may be seen as a victory of the rebels and will change the status quo in the area.

On the other hand, the war has already lasted 5 years and has cost the lives of thousands of soldiers and hundreds of thousands of civilians. The public opinion is demanding a withdrawal and sooner or later the NATO forces have to leave. The American forces are facing difficulties and they have to split their forces wisely between Iraq and Afghanistan. They have to leave at some time, but they have also to secure the country. They are facing a dilemma: should they withdraw their forces before they are eliminated or should they face the consequences and the casualties of a large-scale war?

**Taliban/al-Qaeda forces**

The Taliban, together with Al-Qaeda members have fled to the mountains. There they regrouped and now they are attacking the NATO forces. They occupy big territories in southern and eastern Afghanistan and from there they launch big scale attacks and suicide bombings. Their army consists of several thousand guerrilla fighters, but they are assisted by large amounts of the population. Therefore it is easy for them to plan suicide bombings and other terrorist activities.

The Taliban are thought to be supported by Pakistan too, which seeks to find a solution in the close ties between Afghanistan and its historical enemy, India. Pakistan provides a safe heaven to rebels and they provide it with a tool to press the Afghan government. The USA and the NATO have asked from Pakistan to close its borders to mudjahedins from Afghanistan, but it has denied any involvement in protecting terrorists.

The Taliban are facing difficulties too. They are isolated on mountains, where they receive only little help. Some of their fighters have been fighting for over 20 years, as the first clashes are dated back to the 80’s and the soviet invasion. They have no representation in the government and they are not officially recognised by any state. This is a very big problem as they can not be represented in international organizations.

**Civilians**

The real victims of this war are the civilians. Afghanistan has a population of 26.6 millions. Its population consists of 42% Pashtuns (Sunní Muslims, who are thought to come from ancient Hebrews), 27% Tajiks (Sunní Muslims, who come from the Persians) and 9% Hazara (Shia Muslims that come from the Mongols).

These people have suffered for over 25 years. Throughout the history of Afghanistan there have been clashes between different tribes, which definitely has weakened the national feeling of the Afghans. They first belong to their lord (it is like a semi-feudal society), then to their tribe (Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbeck or Hazara) and then they are citizens of Afghanistan. The population is spread in thousands of little villages without any communication with the world except for the postman. Therefore they live in very bad conditions and they remind us of medieval societies. Many of them have never gone to any big city.
Under these circumstances the population of Afghanistan is seeing the American forces as invaders. Although their living conditions have rapidly improved, they still remain basic. The society has suffered from human rights abuses during the Taliban regime and now the efforts to protect basic human rights are met with suspicion, as they are something strange for this country. The West can't completely understand Afghan society, as it is completely different. This has lead to various misunderstandings between the American forces and the local population (for example the programme against the production of opium, which has completely failed due to the local populations disinterest in the fight against drugs).

Finally, the population, as indicated by the soviet invasion, is a key factor to attend victory. They currently support their warlords, but it is vital to support their state so that they may survive through the crossfire between the rebels and the foreign forces. The main problem now is gender equality, extreme poverty and poor education, all humanitarian affairs that may affect the result of this war. 

BLOC POSITIONS

We can clearly define for this question that there are not 2 groups. There are the “Willingness” and the “Negatives”. The first group consists of countries like Germany, Japan or UK, mainly NATO members that support the “War against terrorism” and have sent troops to Afghanistan or are willing to do so. Other countries in this block are US-influenced countries or countries that face terrorism problems. This block, which consists of around 70 countries also includes the historical allies in the Middle East (e.g. Israel). The question is more complicated than that though. In order to agree on a resolution dealing with the regional problems all states have to agree. Unless most of the states agree no resolution may be effective. Therefore a dialogue between all states has to take place before any resolution is formed. Furthermore, the bloc consists of countries that have sold their health care system and the Nagi people. By affecting the nation, the question of the “Willingness” and the “Negatives” are clearly defined. The “Willingness” are mainly NATO members and the “Negatives” are countries that have sold their health care system. 

The USA plays a special role in the war in Afghanistan. They called the other members of NATO to support them in their war against the Taliban by activating article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Nowadays there are about 12000 American soldiers in Afghanistan. Their numbers are rising as the USA is currently reinforced with 2000 Polish soldiers. The USA started the war but now, as they face difficulties in Iraq would like to withdraw their troops. In order to secure the country, the alliance is currently sending more and more troops to Afghanistan. The question of the number of troops is rising and the USA is perhaps one of the most vital regions for their Middle East policy.

As there is no coalition of countries that play a special role in the conflict, the USA will now examine some countries that play a special role in the conflict;
Pakistan

Pakistan is also a key-player in the region. Pakistan is the first Muslim state with the nuclear bomb, making it one of the most powerful countries in the region. Pakistan is thought to provide security to numerous Taliban fighters and it has been accused of sabotaging the work of the NATO troops in its borders. Pakistan fears the close bonds between Mr Karzai and India, its historical rival, so it supports some militias in order to press Afghanistan on specific topics.

**QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER**

A resolution passed by the UN should provide a solution to the problem of the security in Afghanistan. The resolution needs to be accepted by both USA and Pakistan. The resolution should provide the required way-out for NATO and propose certain steps towards an independent, legitimate and secured Afghan State. The resolution should cover all three problems: short term steps improving the current situation, long term moves towards an independent state after the expected withdrawal of the NATO troops and also fight the roots of the problem of terrorism and thus deal with humanitarian problems like the lack of schools or extreme poverty.

So, some of the main questions that have to be addressed are:

- What are the main short term steps that should improve the current situation in Afghanistan?
- Should more troops be sent there? If yes, which country should provide them and under what umbrella? If no, how will the security situation in Afghanistan be improved?
- Should a new organization be formed or is ISAF efficient?
- Is a weapon embargo of small arms and light weapons necessary? By who should it be overseen?
- What are the measures that have to be taken in order to stop the suicide bombings?
- How can the terrorists be prevented from crossing the Pakistani-Afghan borders?

- What are the measures necessary to prevent the creation of a chaos after the withdrawal of the US forces?
- How can an effective administration be created?
- Should any economic aid given to the Afghan government? If yes under which conditions?
- Should any negotiation between the clan leaders take place?
- Who should train the Afghan security forces?
- What should be done to secure gender equality?
- How can human rights be protected in Afghanistan?
- Is the problem connected with any other conflicts in the region? If yes, what should be done in this case?
- What steps should be taken to improve the civilians’ opinion of the West?

All in all, the steps proposed by every delegation may vary due to different policies, but they should all promote human rights and work for the creation of an independent state in the near future.

**CONCLUSION**

There is a harsh war going on now in Afghanistan. This landlocked country has already suffered enough. It has lived over 25 years of war. Therefore a solution that secures the creation of an independent and autonomous state should be found. This state should respect human rights, be actively engaged in international organizations and have a good relationship with all of its neighbours. In order to create this state, long consideration is needed, as many complex problems arise. The situation is far more complex than appears, as the war against the Taliban is just another battle against international terrorism, a war that has to be ended up soon as it has already caused many deaths. The situation is very dangerous and a complete resolution shall deal with all the regional conflicts and all the international security problems. With good will from everyone, including the Afghans, the Americans, Afghanistan’s neighbours and its closest allies, a solution can be found.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further information can be found in various internet sites. Only some are mentioned below:

- Visit Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org) and the CIA world factbook (https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/). There you can find statistics for both Afghanistan and your country.
- Visit the Website of the United Nations (www.un.org). There you will find all the resolutions concerning Afghanistan, as well as voting records. There they can also find the voting records for previous resolutions.
- Some big newspapers and press agencies (like Reuters (www.reuters.com), the Guardian (www.guardian.co.uk), CN (www.cnn.com) and BBC (news.bbc.co.uk) have also published special reports on the situation in Afghanistan. You can find them under the section “special reports”. Some are dated back to 2004 but they can help you understand the dynamic way to the current situation and provide you with extra information. Somes examples can be found in news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1569826.stm (Special land profile by the British Broadcasting Corporation), www.nationalgeographic.com/landincrisis/ (Series of articles by the National Geographic) and www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/ (Special report by the British Guardian)
- Other good sources are some political blogs. If you search with the keywords “Afghanistan blog” you can find many quality sites with information on the current situation, as well as personal stories from people actually living this war. Those blogs are mostly written by soldiers or civilians so be very careful when reading them.
- Further research of your countries policy is also needed. With few exceptions the governments sites can give you detailed information. The web address is simply www.gov.(your country’s internet code.)

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http://web.mit.edu/mun/resources.html
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http://indexresearch.blogspot.com/2006/08/index-on-afghanistan.html
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FOOTNOTES

1: North Atlantic treaty, chapter 5: “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”

2: ISAF forces currently in Afghanistan:

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3. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4989456.stm#jamail](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4989456.stm#jamail)

Written by Vasilis Ameranis, Director
TOPIC AREA B

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The question of East Timor refers to the country of the same name. The problem started in the 1970’s, when East Timor was taken over by Indonesia. In the years that followed, hundreds of thousands of people were killed due to political unrest. In 1999, under a UN-supervised vote, East Timor decided to be independent. However, this caused more demonstrations and UN peacekeeping forces had to intervene. East Timor’s independence was officially recognized internationally in 2002. During 2006, a new crisis broke out due to instabilities in the military and the police force, causing more riots. Despite UN efforts, these revolts continue to plague the country today.

History of the Problem

East Timor (also known as Timor-Leste) is located in Southeastern Asia, North of Australia. It is part of a large island on the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago.

East Timor has been in a state of political unrest for over 30 years. On the 28th of November 1975, it declared independence from Portugal. However, only nine days later it was taken over by neighboring Indonesian forces. Indonesia’s excuse for this invasion was the civil war that had broken out between Fretilin and the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), the two major Timorese political parties. The USA, together with its ally Australia, supported Indonesia’s invasion, as Indonesia had claimed that Fretilin had communist ties with the People’s Republic of China. USA feared that communism would spread in Southeast Asia, especially after the outcome of the Vietnam War. Fretilin guerilla fighters tried to withstand the Indonesian forces, but on the 16th of July 1976, East Timor was officially declared Indonesia’s 27th province. In the UN, its status was declared “non-self-governing territory under Portuguese administration,” as the UN has never recognized Indonesia’s occupation over East Timor. However, despite passing a resolution to resolve the conflict, no action was taken by the Security Council.

Indonesian rule over East Timor was brutal. There were several massacres of innocent civilians, such as in Dili, the capital and largest city of East Timor, and in the Liquiçá Church. Estimates of civilian deaths during the occupation range from 60,000 to 250,000, many due to disease or starvation. (Amnesty International estimates 200,000 deaths, while a detailed statistical report prepared for the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor found a lower value of 102,800 conflict-related deaths in the period 1974-1999.) Agriculture, food, and medical supplies, all vital for survival, were deliberately hindered by Indonesian forces.

Under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, the Fretilin guerilla forces continued efforts to combat Indonesian occupation. While there were several successful attempts during the first two to three years of occupation, which managed to cause significant damage to Indonesian forces, later efforts were weaker.

A turning point for the East Timorese people took place in November 1991, when a huge crowd attending the funeral of a pro-independence activist marched through Dili, demonstrating in favor of the country’s independence. The Indonesian military forces fired on the protesters, killing between 100 and 180 mourners and arresting hundreds more. Timorese groups claimed that as many as 100 of the arrested demonstrators and other witnesses of the massacre were later executed.

After his election to the presidency in May 1998, President Habibie announced a referendum for the East Timorese, which took place on August 30,
1999, in which the nation would vote whether East Timor would become an autonomous region of Indonesia or an independent nation. The popular referendum was supervised by the UN, in agreement with Portugal, Indonesia, and the United States. The results showed that the vast majority – almost 80% - of the East Timorese people desired complete independence from Indonesia.

A long line of civilians waiting to vote in a small mountain village in August 1999

However, in the days following the referendum, riots broke out. These clashes were started mainly by Timorese militias that were in favor of Indonesian occupation, organized by the Indonesian military. During these riots, approximately 1,400 pro-independence Timorese civilians were killed and roughly 300,000 were forced to move into West Timor, part of Indonesia, as refugees. Furthermore, a great portion of the country’s infrastructure, including homes, irrigation systems, water supply systems, schools, the electrical grid, and 70% of the economic infrastructure were destroyed. The military had control over the streets, and towns, including the capital city, Dili, were pillaged.

The Indonesian government tried to dismiss the importance of the events, but eventually gave in to UN peacekeeping forces that were trying to access the East Timor area. Thus, INTERFET (the International Force in East Timor), led by Australia, was able to land in East Timor on the 20th of September 1999 in order to restore order. As a result of this action, the Indonesian military spread to the Indonesian borders, especially to the New Zealand Army-held southern half of the main border, and attempted to raid the peacekeeping forces from this new position. These raids were repelled, forcing Indonesia to withdraw support for the militias, who dispersed soon after.

INTERFET was replaced by a UN force of International Police, and the mission became known as UNTAET (UN Transitional Administration in East Timor) in October 1999. UNTAET was to administer East Timor during its transition towards independence and to help rebuild the territory. UN peacekeeping forces formally took control in February 2000. Moreover, the East Timor Transitional Cabinet and the National Council were established, and the UNTAET Crime Scene Detachment was formed to investigate alleged atrocities. Many cases were dismissed, and there was concern when others who were tried escaped with lenient sentences, but notable among the convictions was that of Eurico Guterres, former militia leader, who was convicted of being responsible for the deaths of over 1,000 people.

In early 2001, the UNTAET forces represented 47 countries and numbered over 9,000 uniformed personnel. Finally, on 20 May 2002, East Timor was internationally recognized as an independent state. It joined the World Bank in July of the same year and was then accepted as the newest member of the United Nations in September 2002.

CURRENT SITUATION

Despite UN efforts to resolve peace in the area and to rebuild East Timor’s infrastructure, a crisis has broken out this past year (2006). This is due to a dispute within the military of East Timor (PDTL), between soldiers from the western part of the country (known as Loromonu) and soldiers from the eastern part (known as Lorosae). The Loromonu argue that
the Lorosae, who formed the main part of the Fretelin guerilla resistance to the Indonesian occupation, are favored in the FDTL. Disputes have also arisen in the police force, which is largely made up of the Loromonu and former members of the Indonesian military.

As a result of the tension, on February 8, 2006, 404 soldiers of the 1500 that normally make up the FDTL deserted their barracks, followed by 177 more on the 25th of February. Even though these soldiers were ordered to return in March, they have refused, and as a result they have been relieved from duty.

The soldiers, together with civilian supporters largely comprised of the unemployed, marched in Dili on April 24, attacking a store run by Lorosae. The protests continued, and on April 28th, police fired on the protesters, killing five. In response there was an uproar during which one hundred buildings were destroyed and an estimated 21,000 Dili residents fled the city. There was more violence this past May, when an FDTL officer was killed and many more were injured. In response to all of the unrest, East Timor’s foreign minister asked for assistance from Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia. The countries responded quickly, arriving on the 25th of May, when an estimated 20 people were killed. The peacekeeping effort is named Operation Astute and is led by Australia.

On June 20th, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 1690, expressing its support for the existing international peacekeeping effort. Five days later, the Council adopted Resolution 1704 creating the new United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and giving permission to Australia to retain leadership of the joint military task force.

As a result of the political unrest, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri resigned on June 26. His position was taken by José Ramos Horta on July 8, 2006.

The profound causes of this recent crisis can be traced to social divisions between those with ties to Indonesia and the Timorese natives. These divisions stem from the long occupation of East Timor by Indonesia.

Currently, the situation in East Timor is very fragile. Despite peacekeeping efforts, there are daily riots and killings of innocent civilians. The government, relatively weak as it has been in place for only four years, faces great difficulty in keeping the country under control. The basic infrastructure, destroyed during Indonesian occupation, has only partially been rebuilt. East Timor’s economy needs strengthening. An indication of the extremely poor state it is in is the fact that the GDP per capita is $800, one of the lowest worldwide. Unemployment is also quite high, reducing domestic production.

East Timor continues to face conflicts with Indonesia as well. Indonesia still refuses to recognize East Timor’s complete independence. Furthermore, national boundaries between the two countries remain unresolved up to this day.

BLOC POSITIONS

The major countries involved in the issue are East Timor, Indonesia, and to a lesser degree Portugal, from which East Timor declared independence in 1975.

Indonesia’s position on the issue is that East Timor should be declared a country of “special autonomy.” While it has backed off from the position that there should be full recognition of “Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor,” it refuses to recognize East Timor’s full independence.

East Timor’s position, based on the 1999 votes, is that of full independence.

The position of Portugal along with the rest of the Member States of the UN is that the 1999 voting decision of East Timor should be followed.

Despite the above, Indonesia agrees with the other UN members that efforts should be made to move the peace process forward and to establish security in the East Timor territory.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

• How can the chaos and the everyday riots that are taking place all over the country be stopped?

• What steps can be taken to end political unrest in East Timor?
• What will happen to the soldiers that have been relieved from duty?

• How will discrimination be abolished in the process of choosing soldiers to recruit in the FDTL and in the police force?

• How will a consensus be met that satisfies the opinion of the international community – including that of Indonesia?

• How will the country face the great difficulty of the rebuilding of the necessary infrastructure, such as civil service, police, judiciary, education, health systems, and more?

• How will the economy be improved significantly, preferably through sustainable development?

• How will East Timor’s administration be strengthened, as it is only in its early stages, after only four years of internationally recognized independence?

• How will unemployment be solved? It should be noted that there must be a solution that will generate jobs for young people entering the work force. One of the problems that prevents new jobs from being created in East Timor is the technology-intensive industry, as there are no production facilities in the country.

• How will the issue of national boundaries between Indonesia and East Timor be resolved? For example, several sections of the boundary, especially around the Oekussi enclave, are still being debated upon. Also, Indonesia and East Timor both want control over the uninhabited coral island of Pulau Batek/Fatu Sinai.

• How will the many accusations of alleged atrocities of Indonesian forces and of individuals during the Indonesian occupation (1974 – 1999) be resolved? It should be noted that many of these cases have been delayed or dismissed.

• How will the topic of refugees be resolved? Many refugees who left East Timor in 2003 still reside in Indonesia and refuse repatriation.

CONCLUSION

As stated above, the situation in East Timor after international recognition of independence in 2002 has been improving. However, the crisis in 2006 brought new and more immediate problems, in addition to the ones concerned with economic development and political empowerment. These new problems need direct and effective solutions, on which Indonesia should come to a consensus with the international community.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

I encourage you to view the sources listed in “Bibliography” which have helped me write this study guide. Additionally, more research should definitely be done from your own country’s perspective. You should be clear about the relationship the country you are representing has to the problem of East Timor. Moreover, you might want to look into some more specific details of events from the past year that led to the 2006 crisis, or specific devastating riots, such as the ones that took place in May 2006. Another area to expand upon, which would help you answer the issue of sustainable development you must address, is that of East Timor’s current economic treaties and deals, such as a newly agreed-upon oil treaty with Australia.

I suggest you look at the following articles for further research:

http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/EastTimor.asp
A useful and short outline of East Timor’s history up to 2001.

http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/intcam/east-timor/
Contains many links to articles on human rights violations and issues of justice in East Timor. However, most of the articles were written before 2001.

http://www.zmag.org/CrisesCurEvts/Timor/timor_index.htm
Contains links to recent articles on East Timor, as well as resources for possible activism on the issue.

http://www.scoop.co.nz/features/timorcrisis.html

Coverage of the events in East Timor. Also contains a chronology of the events of the crisis


An essay describing the East Timor crisis and its consequences. Also contains very useful suggestions for solutions of some of the questions your resolution must answer.

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