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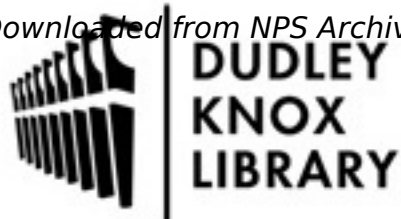
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# International Interim Governments, Democratization, and Post-Conflict Peace-building: Lessons from Cambodia and East Timor

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by Aurel Croissant

## Introduction

Some years ago the British diplomat Robert Cooper created a huge controversy when he argued that "liberal imperialism" is a legitimate response to the chaos and disorder of civil strife and disrupted states. But yesterday's heresy has become today's conventional wisdom. In his new book "Empire Lite," Michael Ignatieff, declares: "Temporary imperialism? Empire Lite? has become the necessary condition for democracy in countries torn apart by civil war."[1] Is he right? Is externally directed and monitored democratization an appropriate strategy for successful peace-building in post-conflict environments? Are liberal protectorates or international interim governments stable institutional bridges between regimes that can carry a society from conflict to sustainable peace? This study discusses this subject with reference to Cambodia and East Timor.

In discussing the question: 'to what extent have the international interim governments contributed to democratization and post-conflict peace-building in Cambodia and East Timor,' the study proceeds in five steps:

1. First, it discusses general problems of democratization through international interim governments and peace-building in countries and territories characterized by civil strife and disrupted stateness.
2. The second part of the study analyzes the background conditions, facilitating factors and obstructive conditions for democratization and peace-building through UN-led transitional governments in both countries.
3. Next, the paper describes the nature of transitional authority, its legitimacy, organization and operational methods of the two interim governments.
4. Section four evaluates the successes and failures of both interim governments and examines the causes for both governments' achievements and shortcomings.
5. The conclusion draws some lessons from the experiences of the two countries in coping with the challenge of democratization and peace-building through international interim governments.

## International Interim Governments

In their seminal work on interim governments and democratic transitions, Yossi Shain and Juan Linz developed the model of international interim governments, defined by the authors as those forms of transitional authority, "in which the international community, through the aegis of the United Nations, directs and monitors the process of democratic change."[2] Obviously, this is neither the only form of interim government, nor the only mode of externally monitored democratization. Additional models of democratizing interim governments developed by Shain and Linz are provisional, power-sharing, and caretaker governments. Another, empirically more frequent, mode of externally directed and monitored transition from authoritarianism is democratization through war and imposition, exercised either by a domestic administration under more or less explicit control of external powers (post-Taliban Afghanistan), or directly by the occupation forces (Germany and Japan after World War II).[3]

Michael Doyle has recently developed the idea of international interim regimes a step further by presenting a fourfold typology of transitional authority which allows classifying different subtypes of international interim regimes.[4] The four types of transitional authority (supervisory, executive, and administrative authority and monitor) are differentiated from each other by the degree of legal authority and effective international capacity the interim regime enjoys. The figure below demonstrates that three of Doyle's types of transitional authority are subtypes of international interim government, while the fourth type (monitor) is not.

**Figure 1: Interim government types[5]**
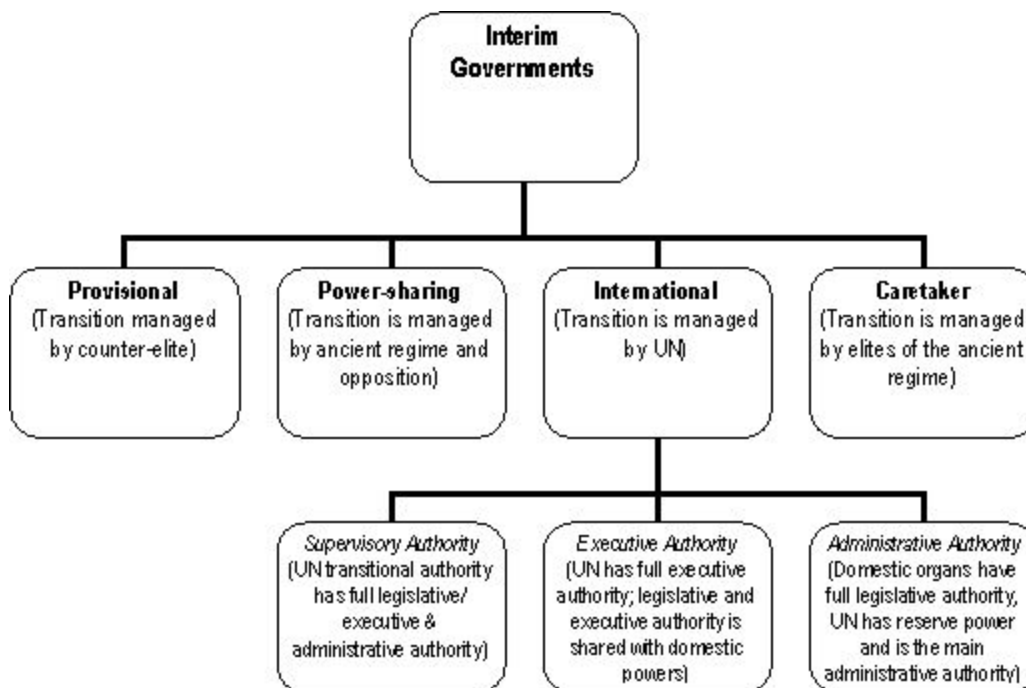


While the work of Shain and Linz focuses on the role that interim governments play in enhancing or impeding the democratic outcome in the transition from authoritarianism, Doyle is interested in the role that UN transitional authorities play in post-conflict peace-building. The latter is a complex, multidimensional challenge that reaches far beyond directing and monitoring the process of democratic change.

However, there is a close relationship between democratization through international interim governments and peace-building. Post-conflict peace-building describes all operations conducted by an interim government organized either through an international organization like the United Nations (as in the case of Cambodia and East Timor) or the government of another sovereign state "to foster economic and social cooperation" among the political elites of a specific territory "with the purpose of building confidence among previously warring parties; developing the social, political, and economic infrastructure to prevent future violence; and laying the foundations for a durable peace."[6] It involves "the implementation of complex, multidimensional peace agreements" which include, in addition to more traditional tasks of peacekeeping such as monitoring cantonment and demobilization, resettling refugees, and supervising transitional civilian authorities, "monitoring and organizing the implementation of human rights, national democratic elections, and economic rehabilitation."[7] While legal methods emphasize issues of transitional justice, the focus of political methods is on democratic institution building to promote liberal democracy; economic measures emphasize socioeconomic development. Therefore, democratization through international interim government in post-conflict societies can best be understood as one dimension of the multidimensional project of peace-building.[8] Long-term success in relation to democratization critically depends on how much transitional authorities achieve regarding the economic, social and political components of peace-building.

It is evident that democratization through international interim government occurs in a much more challenging context than other forms of democratization. Shain and Linz have formulated five basic propositions for the applicability of the international interim government model.[9] Most fundamentally, this model requires that domestic state institutions remain largely intact; that is, failed states are unsuited to the model. Second, the incumbent regime has not been totally delegitimated and still exerts control over the means of violence; third, foreign patrons of domestic parties support the international interim government; fourth, domestic parties have a genuine interest in conflict accommodation; and fifth, domestic parties communicate and interact among each other. Clearly in many post-civil war societies, none of these conditions hold.

There are, however, additional reasons why democratization through international interim governments in disrupted states and societies torn apart by civil strife is often more difficult than other transitions to democracy. The sovereignty of the people and the accountability of the government towards its citizens are the core principles of democracy. International interim governments, however, by definition lack democratic legitimacy—the sovereignty *de facto* (if not *de jure*) passes on from the people on to an external power. Thus, democracy is supposed to be introduced under the imposition of a tremendous deficit of democratic legitimacy.

At the same time, international interim governments, particularly UN transitional authorities, must bear a double, sometimes conflictive, accountability. They are *de jure* accountable to the external principal organizing, controlling and financing its mission. In the case of an UN-led interim government, the UN Secretariat and the Security Council are the principal. *De facto*, however, the interim government also is accountable to the domestic elites and the people of the territory it is ruling and for whom it has to construct a self-sustainable democratic system.[10]

Furthermore, transitions from authoritarianism in post-conflict societies occur under extremely obstructive political, social and economic conditions. In general, public and social infrastructures are typically underdeveloped in a poor state. There are the challenges of refugees and internally displaced persons. Power resources are concentrated in the hands of military commanders and entrepreneurs of violence, and there is a dramatic need to reconstruct public order and security. Markets do not function properly, and macroeconomics are unstable. Furthermore, comparative studies show that the reconstruction of civil strife-torn economies requires an extensive amount of time. In the past, most countries rarely recovered within the first decade following a civil war.[11] The experiences of war-torn countries show that they do not have the ability to develop sustainable growth without extensive international assistance. This, however, often leads to the emergence of an extreme type of rent-seeking economy, in which the accumulation of external

rents and its transformation into local rents are the most attractive form of economic activity.[12] This has strong negative consequences for the transparency and the accountability of the political process. This constellation of factors increases with other, more general problems of successful democratization.

Finally, where civil strife has disrupted the pre-existing government, former enemies may have agreed on a ceasefire or peace, but not on who should govern the peace. Even where the organization of an international interim government is based on the agreement of the warring parties, this agreement is often based on the factions' inability to change the political status quo in their respective favor. It may be more a tactical agreement than the consequence of a successful elite settlement. As a result, peace elections in post-conflict societies are dramatic events, and the stakes are very high, probably higher than in founding elections in other young democracies.[13]

Therefore, as a rule, those countries, which are the most likely targets for liberal protectorates, are the most unlikely candidates for successful democratization.

## Conditions for Democratization and Peace-Building in Cambodia and East Timor

Among the manifold differences between Cambodia and East Timor, the nature of the conflict that preceded the interim regimes is probably the most fundamental. In Cambodia warring parties had fought each other since 1970: first, the regime of General Lon Nol versus the communist Khmer Rouge guerillas (1970-75), followed by a four year reign of Khmer Rouge terror under the leadership of Pol Pot (1975-79), during which approximately one fifth of the population was murdered or died as a result of the misrule of the Khmer Rouge. Then, after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1979, the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), a three-party coalition of Khmer Rouge, the royalist FUNCIPEC (The National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia) and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (former pro-Lon Nol forces) fought a guerrilla war with the pro-Vietnamese government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (from 1989 on: State of Cambodia, SoC).

By the end of 1986, neither Vietnam and the State of Cambodia (with support from the Soviet Union) nor the CGDK forces (with support from Thailand, China and the United States) were in a position to dictate terms. Faced with military stalemate, a weakened political and diplomatic position, and domestic economic problems, the Vietnamese government withdrew its troops in 1989. The State of Cambodia could now no longer hope for victory, despite its continuing numerical military dominance. Informal negotiations between the CGDK and the State of Cambodia led to official peace talks in Paris in 1991. Under the guidance of the UN Security Council's Permanent Five and supported by the governments of Australia, Indonesia, Japan and other concerned states, the war parties signed the 1991 Paris Accord which mandated the establishment of an interim government, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

In contrast, the nearly 25 year conflict in East Timor was between an indigenous liberation movement against occupation forces, not a civil war. As a consequence of the 1974 "Revolution of the Carnations," Portugal's moribund empire, to which East Timor belonged since the sixteenth century belonged, rapidly crumbled. In the following months, conflicts between the pro-Independence Frente Revolucionara de Timor Leste Independente or Fretilin, the pro-Indonesian integrationalist Apodeti and the anti-Fretilin Timorese Democratic Union (UTD) escalated into open civil war.[14] Subsequently, on December 7, 1975, Indonesian troops landed and secured military control of the capital city of Dili. Although Jakarta's full-scale invasion of East Timor aborted de-colonization in East Timor, the United Nations maintained a strict policy of non-

recognition of Indonesia's invasion and subsequent annexation of East Timor. As a result, the question of East Timor's independence remained on the international agenda.

The window of opportunity for the decolonization of East Timor, which had been closed by Indonesia, once again opened after Indonesia's transition to democracy in 1998. Partially because of the weakened ability of the Indonesian government to control the situation on the island and partially because of the increasingly diffuse situation in Indonesian politics, the situation in East Timor became progressively more volatile. A shift in U.S. policy towards Indonesia and growing support in Australia for the self-determination for the Timorese may have also contributed to Indonesia's Interim President Habibie's decision on January 27, 1999, to propose limited autonomy for East Timor. In subsequent negotiations, Indonesia, Portugal and the UN concluded a set of three agreements on May 5, 1999 in New York. The agreements included a ceasefire between Fretilin and the Indonesian military and the conduct of a consultation vote that would enable the East Timorese to choose between a permanent autonomous status within Indonesia and a transition to independence under the aegis of the United Nations.

On June 11, 1999, the Security Council established United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). UNAMET, which had already started to deploy a preparatory contingent in late May 1999, went into Timor without the protection of armed UN peacekeeping troops. The referendum that took place on August 30, 1999 had a voter turnout of 98 percent with 79.5 per cent voting in favor of independence. In response, pro-Indonesian militias with the support or under direct command of the Indonesian army began "Operation Clean Sweep," a three-week destruction campaign. About 70 per cent of East Timor's building stock was destroyed or damaged, and the public and social infrastructure was almost completely destroyed. More than two thirds of the population was displaced, and approximately 1,500 people were murdered.[15]

The orgy of violence created a storm of protest in the international community. Within a matter of days, the deepening humanitarian catastrophe galvanized the United Nations and the major western governments into action. On September 12, President Habibie announced Indonesia's acceptance of a peacekeeping force. Three days later, the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, authorized the establishment of the "International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), a multinational force empowered to use all necessary measures to restore peace and security. Led by Australia and under a unified command, INTERFET began arriving in East Timor on September 20. The Indonesian parliament eventually recognized the result of the consultation in mid-October. A week later, the Security Council, by resolution 12722, established the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). East Timor's international interim government was born.

In Cambodia, the UN transitional authority faced the task of democratization and peace-building after three decades of civil war. In contrast to East Timor, in Cambodia the state was weak but state institutions remained largely intact. The incumbent regime still exerted some control over the means of violence, and the interim regime was initiated by the incumbents. In East Timor, there was no state or regime, as both vanished in flames and ashes after Indonesia had drawn back its troops.

In both countries, changes in international and domestic politics preceded the installation of interim regimes. These changes in the "enabling environment" altered the costs and benefits of continuing the conflict for all parties. After the end of the Cold War, external support for all warring parties in Cambodia rapidly declined. Due to the rapprochement between the United States, China and the ASEAN states on the one hand and Vietnam and the Soviet Union on the other, the political and economic costs of the conflict increasingly exceeded the potential gains from the stabilization of Cambodia, not only from the perspective of those countries which supported the CGDK, but also for Vietnam. Thus, all foreign governments participating in the conflict had an interest to disengage from the civil-war through engagement in the peace-process. This, in turn,

affected the situation in Cambodia because none of the conflict parties were able to continue the fight without external support. Moreover the military campaigns in the late 1980s had proven that neither government nor rebels were able to break the military stalemate.

In East Timor, domestic and international factors also reinforced each other. Due to the results of the consultation vote in August, the East Timorese desire for independence had an unambiguous popular mandate whereas Indonesian claims were discredited. The pro-Indonesian militias in East Timor were dependent on support from Indonesia and could not block any peace solution. It remains an open question why TNI, the Indonesian military, allowed the ballot to proceed at all and why the United Nations and concerned Western governments failed to arrange for possible post-ballot violence before the referendum took place.[16] Once the violence began, however, it strengthened resolve "that East Timor would not be the next Rwanda or Srebrenica," within the UN Security Council. The international community pressured the Indonesian government either to stop the violence or to accept and international intervention force.[17]

Domestic political reasons also played a role. As Gorjao argues, Interim President B.J. Habibie hoped to improve his government's position vis-à-vis the international community, whose goodwill the government desperately needed to manage the financial crisis of the late 1990s.[18] At the same time, President Habibie tried to strengthen his image as a political reformer, which, if successful, would have improved his chances in the up-coming presidential elections. Refusing to cooperate with INTERFET and the UN would have undone any possible domestic political gains and would have weakened the government's bargaining power. The Indonesian military also could accept a solution involving East Timorese independence, since the destructions of September 1999 had already worked as a warning to separatist movements in other parts of the country, for example in Aceh and West-Papua.[19]

The United Nations and some Western countries had key roles in the process which eventually led to the installation of interim governments in both countries. In Cambodia, the United Nations provided the framework for peace negations between the warring parties and external patrons supplied pressure and incentives to induce their domestic clients to cooperate. However, the main actors in Cambodia still were the four hostile factions. In East Timor, by way of contrast, domestic parties played only a minor role. Of course, the indigenous resistance movement's prolonged struggle for independence kept the issue of East Timor's national sovereignty on the international agenda. The East Timorese exile government's diplomacy and the activities of the Timorese Diaspora in Europe also played a role. The major actors in the drama of 1999, however, were the UN Security Council and the governments in Jakarta, Canberra, Washington and Lisbon. Although ASEAN was passive and slow to react to the crisis, some Southeast Asian nations also played a role which facilitated Indonesia's consent to some form of humanitarian intervention.

Still, the challenges for transitional authority were enormous in both countries. Neither society had either democratic experiences or traditions of constitutionalism and civil society from which the UN administrations could have benefited. Particularly in Cambodia, the deliberate deepening of social conflicts by the autocratic rulers left traditional patterns of internal conflict resolution shattered and the sources of social capital drained. The political, social, and economic infrastructure was destroyed. Most economic and social resources needed for reconstruction were absent. Both societies suffered from the legacies of colonialism, war destruction, a genocide trauma, social anomy and from vast poverty and social development.[20] Social reconstruction required the repatriation of a large number of refugees, the reintegration of former combatants into civil society and national reconciliation in both countries.

In addition, state capacity building in Cambodia was retarded by the politicization and underpayment of the bureaucracy and an army that was bloated far beyond national security needs. The warring parties in Cambodia had to be disarmed, and their troops demobilized, while antidemocratic ideologies remained prevalent among the domestic actors and some of the factions were fundamentally unwilling or unable to abide by their commitment to the peace

agreement. As the next section will show, this unwillingness was further aggravated by choices made during implementation.

## UN-led interim governments

The United Nations controlled the interim governments in both countries. However, the depth and effectiveness of the legal authority and *de facto* control of the transitional authority varied considerably. This was largely due to the organizational and juridical status and structure of the interim government, as well as, the domestic situation, particularly the number of domestic actors involved and their position towards the interim government's policies. In the terminology of Doyle, interim government in East Timor belongs to the type of supervisory authority, i.e. the UN transitional authority exercised full legislative, executive and administrative powers. In fact, Chopra compares the UN transitional administration in East Timor with a "pre-constitutional monarch in a sovereign kingdom."[21] Unlike in East Timor, UN transitional authority in Cambodia was restricted to administrative authority, while the Supreme National Council, the local power-sharing government of all four warring parties with Prince Sihanouk as its head, had full legislative authority. UNTAC and its special representative, Yasushi Akashi, were given only the authority to decide when the factions within the council were deadlocked and Prince Sihanouk did not act. UNTAC's primary responsibility was to control the administration in five areas of sovereign activity—defense, finance, foreign affairs, information and public security. UNTAC thus exercised executive power only indirectly. The previously established bureaucratic structures, however, remained intact, and the old bureaucracy, which was riddled with cadres of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), was responsible for the execution of UNTAC's directives. In addition, UNTAC had no mandate to develop a long-term plan for economic reconstruction.

Both post-conflict missions were deployed with the consent or, as in Cambodia, by invitation of all involved domestic parties, expressed in the 1991 Paris Agreement (Cambodia) and the 1999 May 5 Agreement (East Timor). In both countries, the UN played a threefold role as peace-maker, peace-keeper, and peace-builder. In Cambodia, the top priorities of the UN-transitional government were the enforcement of the cease-fire, the disarmament of the warring parties, the holding of elections, and the preparation of the democratic transition. Furthermore, the interim government was authorized to preserve the integrity and sovereignty of the country and to organize the repatriation of refugees and war internees. The timely completion of many of the tasks was the essential pre-condition for undertaking subsequent tasks—a receipt for internal tensions and delays.

Implementation of military and civilian operations started on March 15, 1992. In July, the UN cantonment, disarmament and demobilization programs began. The interim administration prepared a new election law for the upcoming general elections and began registering voters and implementing various voters education programs in October that year. UNTAC was able to stabilize the country's security situation, so that in May 1993, free and fair elections could be conducted. Based on the framework of the Paris Accord, the newly elected parliament drafted a constitution for the Kingdom of Cambodia. The constitution was officially promulgated in September 1993 after the parliament had approved the new all-party grand coalition government under the equal leadership of FUNCIPEC and CPP. At the end of that month the UN interim administration ceased.[22]

The interim government in East Timor developed in five phases:

- UNAMET (June 1999–October 1999). UNAMET's mandate was to conduct the consultative referendum on August 30, 1999.
- INTERFET (September 1999–February 2000). INTERFET was authorized by the UN Security Council to use all necessary measures to restore peace and security in East Timor. INTERFET was displaced by an UN-Peacekeeping Force in February 2000.

- UNTAET (October 1999–May 2002).
- UNMISET (May 2002–June 2005). East Timor became independent on 20 May 2002. On the same day, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor to provide assistance to East Timor over a period of two years until all operational responsibilities were fully devolved to the East Timor authorities. Subsequently, the Council extended UNMISET's mandate for another year to permit the new nation of Timor-Leste to attain self-sufficiency.
- UNOTIL (since June 2005). The United Nations Office in Timor-Leste. UNOTIL is a simplified version of the previous mission with no peacekeeping component.

Strictly speaking, only UNTAET was an interim regime with fully developed supervisory authority, while Phase I and II constituted necessary steps toward the interim government, and Phase IV marked a transition from international interim government to a self-governing democratic polity.

The UN Security Council, in its resolution 1272 of October 25, 1999 endowed UNTAET to exercise full executive and legislative authority during the period of transition from Indonesian rule until full national sovereignty.[23] So, the interim government's mandate in East Timor was more comprehensive than in Cambodia. More specifically, its mandate consisted of providing security, establishing an effective administration, assisting in the development of civil and social services, ensuring coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, economic rehabilitation and development; supporting capacity building for self-government, and supporting sustainable development. In other words, "UNTAET would have to invent a functioning state in East Timor."[24]

From the very beginning, UNTAET suffered from "an underlying tension between the mandate to govern East Timor and a longer-term, strategic objective of preparing East Timor for democratic self-government."[25] Establishing a civil administration, a new police force, a judiciary system, a monetary system and banking sector and a fiscal and taxation system, as well as ensuring the delivery of basic health and education services, assisting in the repatriation of displaced persons, supporting the emergence of civil society, and assisting in the establishment of local administrations, supporting decentralization were the core tasks for UNTAET. It accomplished these tasks quite successfully considering it had to start from ground zero.

Yet the interim government lacked a consistent approach in dealing with the indigenous elites and population. The initial approach was not to integrate Timorese into the transitional structure but rather to recruit locally a separate civil service. Following deepening criticism of this approach, UNTAET reacted with the establishment of a non-elected and strictly advisory National Consultative Council, composed of UNTAET and East Timorese representatives. This ill-received initial approach in "Timorization" of the interim government subsequently was replaced by the National Council, a transitional cabinet with executive authority in which half the portfolios were entrusted to East Timorese representatives from the territory's thirteen districts, political parties and members of various social organizations.[26] Many Timorese and even some of UNTAET's own representatives criticized the transitional authority for following a mostly cosmetic approach to "Timorization," without having a broader integration strategy of power-sharing with the indigenous elites.[27] However, UNTAET still enjoyed broad public support and successfully conducted elections for a constitutional convention in August 2001 and for a president in April 2002.

## Legacies of UNTAC and UNTAET

Both interim governments achieved their short term goals; however, there are still questions about long term achievements in terms of *sustainable* peace-building and *durable* democratization. This study argues that in contrast to optimists who view East Timor as an overwhelming success of peace-building and democratization under aegis of the United Nations,

and pessimists, who describe UNTAC as a flop, that the performance of interim governments in both countries is best seen as a limited success.

## Cambodia

UNTAC achieved a number of its immediate goals: stabilization was successful, peace-building was only a partial success and democratization was mostly a failure. UNTAC was able to repatriate a considerable number of refugees, and its presence forced the warring parties to moderate their tactics.[28] It created an environment in which the threat of a new regional conflict was reduced, and the Cambodian people, for the first time in thirty years, could begin to think about the future of their country.

UNTAC also conducted free and fair elections. The election, though boycotted by the Khmer Rouge and held in a context of mutual mistrust, turned out to be UNTAC's biggest success. Voter turnout was 89.5 percent, despite the Khmer Rouge's threats to disrupt the poll (which did not materialize). The elections ended with a surprising victory of the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (*Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif or FUNCINPEC*) led by Prince Ranariddh. FUNCINPEC and the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party together won 68 of 120 total seats in the National Assembly, whereas the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) led by Hun Sen won 51 seats. At the end of the mission, a popularly elected government took over power from UNTAC. For the first time in over three decades, Cambodia had an unstable but legitimate government. Furthermore, any assessment of the interim government's performance must be placed in the historical context. To argue that there is no improvement in human rights, democratic freedoms or human security in general is misleading.[29]

On the other hand, for a number of reasons, the assumption that the interim government could achieve liberal democracy and political stability in an almost totally unpredictable national environment within an arbitrarily fixed period, after which international support would be dramatically curtailed, was unrealistic.[30] First, the UN peacekeeping force could not realize the military component of the peace agreement. Demobilization and disarmament of the various factions were a critical shortcoming of the whole mission. From the summer of 1992, the Khmer Rouge blocked disarmament of its troops and did not allow the peacekeeping force to enter its territory.[31] As a consequence of UNTAC's decision not to force disarmament of the Khmer Rouge, the other parties also denied disarming their troops. After the departure of the UN troops, fighting once again erupted. Although the civil war continued at a low intensity, it did not stop until 1997.

Second, UNTAC also failed to provide a neutral political environment for the assumption of power by the newly-elected Cambodian government. Failure to disarm and demobilize aggravated the security dilemma, particularly for the opposition factions. The more time UNTAC lost on the disarmament issue, the more the peace agreement eroded. Political and military tensions, and attacks on UNTAC-staff increased in numbers and intensity especially in the run-up to the elections. This, in turn, led UNTAC to restrict its presence more and more to the capital city.[32] While all political parties violated the rules of the transition game, it seems that CPP and Khmer Rouge were responsible for most incidences.

This development was an unintended consequence of the fact that UNTAC failed to control the Cambodian bureaucracy. UNTAC's lack of manpower (170 mission staff were expected to oversee more than 100,000 Cambodian civil servants under CPP control alone), technical difficulties and the lack of knowledge of the Cambodian history, culture or language, allowed the ruling Cambodian People's Party to shield the bureaucracy from UN surveillance. The interim government's operational problems, especially in the beginning phase of UNTAC, increased opportunities for the Khmer Rouge and the CPP for non-compliance as well as decreased any

embryonic confidence the factions might have had in UNTAC's capabilities to provide neutrality and security.

Fourth, the UN administration had only weak instruments to enforce the Cambodian parties to accept the outcome of the poll. While UNTAC was based on the consent of the factions as expressed in the Paris agreement, during the implementation period the transitional authority found itself operating without the continuous or complete cooperation of the two most powerful political parties, the CPP and the Khmer Rouge. Although the success of voter registration and the high voter turn-out attested to the interim governments claim that most Cambodians endorsed the plan to introduce democracy in Cambodia, the CPP successfully re-established itself as the hegemonic political force. In fact, the Cambodian Peoples' Party as the main looser of the 1993-poll refused to accept the outcome, rather claiming that it was the result of UNTAC's partisanship to advantage the opposition. The political crisis was temporarily settled by building a grand coalition consisting of all relevant political parties. FUNCINPEC and the CPP formed a coalition government with Ranariddh and Hun Sen as First and Second Prime Minister.

This compromise proved to be fragile. In 1997 conflicts between the two major parties escalated into what is viewed by many as a *coup d'etat* of Hun Sen (CPP) against Ranariddh. Due to firm reaction of the international community, Hun Sen was forced to re-allow limited standards of competition in the 1998 and 2003 elections. Since the CPP effectively controlled the preparation of the polls, electoral defeat was unthinkable, although the polls "were generally well and fairly administered in a technical and organizational sense."[33] The CPP used its overwhelming coercive power and resources to implement a strategy of "intimidation by incumbency," which effectively prevented a level playing field.[34] Although lacking a dramatic shift from electoral democracy to open autocracy, the failure of the UN mission in fulfilling critical parts of its mandate has nevertheless paved the way for the emergence of a new hegemonic one-party-system that is softer and more stable than any other regime has been for the last thirty years.

Regarding the causes for the shortcomings of democratization, four critical factors can be identified:

- First, the peace agreement faced a number of birth defects. The agreement constructed the interim regime as a hybrid co-government between the deeply divided Cambodian coalition government on the one hand and the UN-transitional authority on the other. It forced hostile parties into a political "shotgun wedding"? a marriage that "brought together political combatants for whom the election was a continuation of the war, rather than the basis for sharing power agreeably."[35] The transitional authority's inappropriate framework, along with the enduring military and political strength of the CCP? especially on local and regional levels? transferred the political struggle from the battle-fields into the state itself: it "undermined political transition in the implementation phase as well as in the period between the two elections in 1993 and 1998. [...] stable democratic political transition was temporal in the short, UNTAC-term, and untenable in the longer term."[36]
- Bringing all relevant parties into government and giving them their share of posts in cabinet and bureaucracy led to double, sometimes even threefold structures. This approach not only sustained a dangerous level of factionalism, but also increased the likelihood of corruption. Rather than depoliticizing the CPP-controlled one-party state, power-sharing "created two separate and competing party states operating within every ministry, province, military command and police commissariat. Instead of working with their counterparts from the other party, officials from the prime ministers' level down conducted business with their party clients and colleagues."[37] This retarded the already weak capacity of the public administration "by building and reinforcing parallel structures of personal and party authority, operating both within and outside the state."[38] The size of the armed forces rose disproportionately, resulting in high military expenditures of 30 per cent of the total public expenditures. This temporarily avoided the problem of unemployed and dissatisfied soldiers. However, no central command structure under

neutral command developed. Rather, FUNCINPEC and CPP in fact were in control of their troops, promoting the political fractionalization of the army and securing the military predominance of the CPP.

- The lack of strategic orientation in the international community also contributed to the negative developments of the 1990s. Even though the interim government's measures led to unintended and negative consequences in the early stages of the interim government, the international community stuck to its goal to democratize a country shattered by thirty years of civil war within only 18 months' time. The road-map for democratization was essentially restricted to the holding of free and fair elections without changing the existing structures of political and military power. The constitutional process was rushed and the political institutions were relatively weak at the end of the transition period. However, there were no precautions to bind the warring parties to respect democratic procedures after the election. The international community did not attempt to place constraints on the behavior of domestic factions after the transition period. The international community underestimated the difficulties of the mission, such as lack of political and social tolerance, civic values, experiences with peaceful and cooperative forms of conflict settlement and lacking elite settlement. At the same time, especially Western governments misperceived the strength of the exile parties like FUNCINPEC.
- Finally, the vested entrepreneurs of violence such as the Khmer Rouge, military commanders and various party cadres, had no interest in the stabilization of the state's coercive monopoly, civilian control over the military or the emergence of the rule of law because of their own economic interests in arms-sales, timber, gems, and drug-trafficking. The UN transitional authority neglected long-term development and capacity-building objectives which led to weak results in generating economic recovery, aggravating democratic development. However, UNTAC was not solely responsible for this, given that international donors provided only a fraction of what they had promised at the beginning of the peace process.[39]

### East Timor

UNTAET's achievements are well-summarized by Martin and Mayer-Rieckh: "While the peace operations in East Timor did generally well in the areas of electoral assistance, traditional peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and emergency rehabilitation, UNTAET consistently faced problems with institution building and governance tasks." The lack of a common understanding of capacity-building and the negligence of these issues in the early stages of the transitional authority retarded UNTAET's efforts at institution-building.[40]

While planning for UNTAET was cursory, the planning for UNMISET began early, allowing the transitional authority to develop a detailed and comprehensive plan for the follow-up mission.[41] Even though the interim government in East Timor also ended without having established the social and economic pre-requisites for a working democracy and sustainable development, UNTAET and UNMISET still can be evaluated as more successful than UNTAC. Lessons were drawn from UNTAC's numerous mistakes and failures to better prepare UNTAET. Equipped with relatively large financial and personnel resources--compared to the country's small size— UNTAET was able to reach an unusually swift economic stabilization.[42] The transition from UNTAET to UNMISET led only to a small decline of international engagement. Indeed, the UN Security Council and international donors realized that international support for East Timor was still vital.

UNTAET provided security and the transition to independence and democracy was surprisingly smooth. It is, nevertheless, still unclear if and when the young nation's economy and public administration will be able to stand on its on feet. Foreign aid made up 45 percent of GDP in 2001.[43] UN-staff still occupies many higher positions in civil administration, particularly in the judiciary and budgetary. Repatriation of refugees, reconciliation and transitional justice for past crimes against humanity, committed by militias and the Indonesian military has ceased.

Unemployment is estimated at between 60 and 80 percent and more than 50 percent of the country's 800,000 people or so live on less than $0.55 a day. The slow pace of reconstruction and high unemployment levels are an additional source of disorder. Anti-government demonstrations in East Timor's capital city, Dili, in July 2004, involving former guerilla fighters, indicate a growing frustration among veterans who feel robbed of their independence dividend in a fledging nation with a profoundly week economy and high unemployment.

Furthermore, frustrated former guerrilla fighters and the remnants of pro-Indonesian militias pose a serious internal security problem for the new country, as do rising crime levels, inefficient police force and a weak judiciary. The ability of Timor-Leste's security forces to contain these threats without U.N. help must be seriously questioned.

While the former liberation movement Fretilin consolidates its near-hegemonic power and its prime minister openly boasts that the party will be in power for the next fifty years, the politicization of the security apparatus point to various potentially destabilizing effects from East Timor's semi-presidential system.[44] The dual leadership system and institutionalized competition of democratic legitimacies in semi-presidentialism in general is a recipe for political trouble, and the fact that "the individuals occupying these two critical leadership positions are political opponents, perhaps even political enemies"[45] further aggravates democratic consolidation.

## Conclusion

Bearing in mind that each country's situation is unique to some degree and that its lessons may in fact be limited, it is nevertheless possible to reach some conclusions.

Differences in the nature of the conflict and the domestic constellation of involved factions had an enormous impact on the challenges the two UN interim regimes had to face. A first glance on the propositions for the applicability of the international interim government model suggests that this model was well-suited for Cambodia but not for East Timor.

At closer inspection, however, in turns out that the model of international interim government was highly suitable for East Timor. Furthermore, East Timor, to some extent was even 'easier' then Cambodia, because the UN did not have to achieve just peace and negotiate with the warring parties. By the time the interim regime was established, there were conditions of success that are rarely available to peace missions. The belligerent power had completely withdrawn and an effective multinational force could credibly provide security. The local population enthusiastically welcomed the transitional authority. There was a single domestic faction with which to negotiate-- rather than a number of hostile factions as in Cambodia.

While it is true that the main challenge in East Timor was to build a state and a nation from the ground up, the situation in East Timor was different from the conditions of failed states as we think of them. The main obstacle for the establishment of an UN-led interim regime in failed states is the disintegration of the state which leads to *de facto* privatization of the state's control over the means of legitimate violence and to dispersion of political power. In East Timor, the issue was not power dispersion but the power vacuum that the Indonesians left behind after their retreat. While Fretilin was too weak to take advantage of the situation, INTERFET filled the existing vacuum in less than two months time. In fact, within a couple of months, a new "proto-state under United Nations tutelage" emerged.[46] The non-existence of an incumbent regime disposed the interim government from any dual authority problem between the authority in power and the United Nations Transitional Authority. This institutional and political *tabula rasa* of post-Indonesian East Timor actually provided opportunities for the effective functioning of the interim government. The question remained as to whether the transitional authority would understand and utilize these opportunities.

Perhaps the most basic lesson to be learned from UN-led interim governments in Cambodia and East Timor is that having the support of the local population is critical, but this alone is not sufficient. Successful UN-led interim governments also require elite settlement and the support of the regional powers and international patrons of local clients. International interim governments as in Cambodia and East Timor can be a solution to the problems of civil strife, insecurity and political instability in disrupted states. Under specific circumstances, described by Shain, Linz and others, this type of interim government can provide an escape from the primal condition of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. However, sustainable peace-building and transition from authoritarianism to fully institutionalized liberal democracy requires more than ending civil strife. As Austin writes, "immediately satisfactory elections do not necessarily mean that a democratic government or any of the essential elements of democracy (the rule of law, and independent judiciary and a professional non-partisan civil service including the police and military, and another 'free and fair' election) will be guaranteed."[47]

Particularly in the case of international interim governments, democratizers face a dilemma: in order to reach an agreement, they must assume all domestic parties will participate in good faith. At the same time, however, they must take reassurances against the case that the parties will not or cannot fulfill the agreement made.[48] So, democratization through international interim governments in civil-war countries will be successful only if the transitional authority is able to maintain a "hurting balance of power,"[49] in which all parties realize that continuing the struggle will harm them more than they will benefit. This was the UN's failure in Cambodia. UNTAC was neither able to establish a stable hurting balance of power nor could it guarantee the parties' compliance with democratic procedures.

Particularly, the Cambodian experience proves democratization *de facto* becomes an exit-strategy if the commitment of the international community is restricted to the solution of technical problems and if it leaves politics to the national elite. The Cambodian elite commenced fighting after UNTAC had departed. The democratization process came to a halt and, finally, led to a new authoritarian regime. Obviously it does not make sense to leave the fate of a young democracy in the hands of anti-democratic national elites; however, this was exactly what took place in Cambodia. Rather, the international community must have the will to take responsibility for social and economic reconstruction and to intervene even after the transition process, if there are any negative aberrations occurring afterwards.

Cambodia and East Timor prove that democratization must be embedded in a comprehensive agenda of political, social and economic methods of peace-building. This means that the protectorate will be very expensive for the international community, both in terms of time and in terms of financial and human resources. As a result, interim governments run the risk of becoming never-ending self-replicating political realities. It's a moot point whether the foreign governments and the international community want to accept such enormous responsibilities in countries outside of their own political backyard (Bosnia, the Kosovo) and where engagement will not yield significant security or economic benefits. The opposition of the U.S. government and others to UNMISET's extension, and their insistence on a limited, one-year mandate for UNOTIL, is representative of this problem. However, as the 13 years experience of post-UNTAC Cambodia proves—if interim governments end before the roots of democracy are deep enough and before democratic institutions are strong enough to stand alone, then the entire endeavor may fail.

## About the Author

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