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## FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT

main

This week on *Foreign Assignment*, join hosts **Ian Hanomansing** and **Joe Schlesinger** for these stories:

### Feature Report: Independence for East Timor

The people of East Timor have been seeking self-determination since the 1600s. Since that time the territory has been ruled by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Japanese, and most recently the Indonesians. After a long and arduous struggle against Indonesian rule, the East Timorese voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence in a UN-organized referendum in 1999, but it was followed by intense violence as pro-Indonesian militia tried to prevent secession. The United Nations was forced to move in to protect and administer the region.

On May 20, East Timor will finally, officially become an independent nation, but problems persist. East Timor will immediately rank as one of the world's poorest countries, and the yet-to-be-in-power government has already appealed to international donors to cover a \$90 million budget deficit over the next three years. They say they'll need assistance to maintain the momentum of development and sustain the development the UN administration has set in place.

Has East Timor become too dependent on UN agencies and programs to be able to succeed as a independent nation? This week the CBC's **Patrick Brown** travels to Dili, the capital of East Timor to report on the problems it faces after independence. Tune in for his feature report from East Timor.

For more on this story, you visit the **East Timor Action Network**, a pro-independence advocacy group. You can also read the **Reuters Asia article** on the speculation over the future of Eat Timor. Finally, you can recieve various updated articles on East Timor at **The Asia Foundation** Web site.

### Interview: Sierra Leone Elections

Sierra Leone has been ravaged by a decade of civil war. Child soldiers and brutal atrocities became synonymous with the country's name. Two military coups and ethnic strife led to political destabilization, and rebels in the countryside, called the Revolutionary United Front, tried to grab control of the nation, and its valuable diamond minds. The rebels developed tactics for terror and intimidation, leaving dead bodies on the streets, burning families alive in their homes, and in what became their trademark, hacking off limbs of innocent civilians. After UN intervention, the rebels agreed to a ceasefire. Their leader was captured and jailed a short time later, and the UN introduced a disarmament program. The civil war was declared officially over this

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Sat 09:30pm PT - Sun 12:00am ET  
Sun 08:30am ET - 05:30am ET  
01:30pm ET - 10:30am ET  
06:30pm ET - 03:30pm ET

### This week's

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**Joe Schlesinger**

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### Joe's Essays

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### This week's

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### Archives

past January, and Sierra Leone is now home to the UN's largest peacekeeping force of 17 thousand troops. This past week, parliamentary and presidential elections were held in Sierra Leone. But what does the election mean for the future of the people of Sierra Leone? The CBC's **Azeb Wolde-Giorghis**, who covered the civil war in the country and closely followed the election will join Ian Hanomansing this week to discuss the issue.

For more on this story, you can visit the **Sierra Leone News On-line**, which contains the latest updates on the election count. You can also visit the **U.S. State Department**, which has background notes on Sierra Leone.

#### **Essay: The Human Rights Club**

The United Nation's recent vote to allow Zimbabwe on its Human Rights Commission has caused many to take a critical look at the body and question its effectiveness. How can the UNHRC do it's job of ensuring countries recognize and respect the basic human rights of its people, when some of the most blatant human rights violators are members of the commission? Why are these countries on the UNHRC? And does their presence on the commission totally discredit it as a whole? This week Joe Schlesinger will provide his thoughts on the UNHRC in a new essay.

For more on this story, you can read the **Human Rights Watch** criticism of the appointment of "abusive" new members to the U.N. Human Rights Commission. You can view the full text of the **Charter of the United Nations** as signed at San Fransisco on June 26, 1945.

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## Noam Chomsky

*"We struggled for more than 24 years for independence. We've learned the lesson that even small people have a voice."*

-East Timorese leader Mari Alkatiri

December 2001

*Dear friend of East Timor,*



For the past ten years, members and supporters of the East Timor Action Network (ETAN) – you and people across the country like you – have stood with the people of East Timor during exceptional times. Woven through the many dark years of U.S.-supported Indonesian brutality and international obscurity were moments of hope and victory – moments like the awarding of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and José Ramos-Horta and the 1999 referendum when East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence.

As someone who has been deeply involved with the issue of self-determination for East Timor since before Indonesia invaded, **I can attest to the tremendous – and maybe even decisive – difference that ETAN's wonderful work has made.** Since 1991, ETAN has effectively advocated for human rights for East Timor and accountability of the U.S. government. ETAN channeled our voices of opposition to U.S. policies blocking East Timorese self-determination, and in so doing became a powerful force for change.

Today, independence for East Timor is only months away – but the need for advocacy and international support continues.

East Timor held its first democratic election last August 30, the second anniversary of its historic independence referendum. The election for a Constituent Assembly, which recently finished writing the country's constitution, was peaceful and fair. Over 90% of voters turned out, dramatically demonstrating their strong desire to actively participate in building the country for which they have sacrificed so much.

Yet nearly ten percent of the population was not able to participate in the election. These East Timorese are held in squalid refugee camps in Indonesian West Timor. Humanitarian organizations report widespread violence against women in the camps, which are dominated by the military and its militia thugs, and the deaths of many refugee children from disease and malnutrition. This refugee crisis was created and is maintained by the actions of the Indonesian military and their militia. International pressure on Indonesia has had some results, but increased

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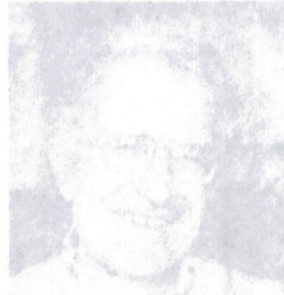
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