CHAPTER FIVE
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN INTERFET

The International Force East Timor (INTERFET) was an *ad hoc* security operation involving approximately 11,000 troops. Its core mandate was to restore peace and security in East Timor following the break-out of violence after a UN-held referendum on East Timorese independence from Indonesia. The UN Security Council authorized the operation by UN Resolution 1264 on September 15, 1999. Operations were launched on September 20, 1999, and lasted until February 28, 2000, when a UN follow-on force (UNTAET) took over from INTERFET. The following countries participated in the operation: Australia (5,500 troops), Thailand (1,580 personnel), the Philippines (600 troops), Jordan (700 troops), Italy (600 military personnel), Canada (600 troops), France (500 troops), New Zealand (500 troops), South Korea (400 troops), United Kingdom (270 troops), Singapore (medical detachment of 254 personnel), United States (200 troops and logistics support), Fiji (191 troops), Germany (medical unit of 100 personnel), Kenya (100 troops), Argentina (50 troops), Brazil (50 military personnel), and token contributions from Denmark, Norway, Egypt, Malaysia, Mozambique, Singapore, and Sweden.316

5.1. CAUSAL PROCESS ANALYSIS: Australia waging intervention in East Timor

This section takes the perspective of the lead nation of INTERFET: Australia. It examines (1) the factors driving Australia to launch an intervention in East Timor; (2) Australia’s motivations to multilateralize the intervention; and (3) the strategy Australia pursued to bring additional countries on board with INTERFET.

5.1.1. OVERALL PREFERENCE STRUCTURE

Australia showed without a doubt the strongest preference intensity for launching INTERFET and thus stands out at INTERFET’s Lead Nation. As we will see in more detail later on, Australia was a key player in the run-up to the UN-held referendum on East Timorese independence from Indonesia. Once the prospect of potential military intervention in East Timor became apparent, Australia took the lead in rallying support for an intervention at the United Nations in New York. In March 1999, six months before the referendum, Australia dispatched a military officer to New York to make sure that the United Peacekeeping Department (UNDPKO) had its eyes set on East Timor. Once the decision to intervene was taken, Australia led the force generation process. Prime Minister Howard himself contacted potential troop contributing countries (TCCs) to request troop contingents. At the United Nations, Australia asked the United Kingdom and the United States—both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to help draft UN resolutions pertaining to East Timor. Australia contributed over two-thirds of INTERFET troops and spent between US$ 420-481 million on the INTERFET intervention.

Figure 5.1 below shows the variation in countries’ revealed interests through UN statements on East Timor. Apart from the U.K. and the U.S., which served as Australia’s spokespersons at the United Nations, Portugal also manifested intense interest in the East Timor crisis. Nevertheless, due to its patent anti-Indonesia bias, it was largely sidelined

317 Author’s interview with high ranking Australian military official, Canberra, November 2011.
318 Coleman 2007, 267.
319 Coleman 2007, 255.
320 Ibid.
in the set-up of INTERFET.\textsuperscript{321} China took a skeptical stance on the East Timor intervention at the UN criticizing Australia for interfering in Indonesia’s domestic affairs. Finally, France showed interest in the East Timor because it wanted to prove its status as \textit{Pacific Power}.\textsuperscript{322}

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\caption{UN Speech Record Evaluation East Timor}
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\textit{Lead Nation Preference Formation Process}

East Timor forms part of the Indonesian archipelago northwest of Australia. It was colonized by Portugal in the sixteenth century. Following Portugal’s Carnation Revolution of April 25, 1974, the Portuguese abandoned the island, and civil war broke out between the communist \textit{Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor} (Fretilin) and the right-wing \textit{Timorese Democratic Union} (UDT). Fearful of the rise of a potentially communist

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\textsuperscript{321} Author’s interview with high-ranking Australian military official, Goulburn, December 2011.
\textsuperscript{322} Author’s interview with high-ranking French military official, Paris, February 2011.
\end{flushright}
neighboring state, Indonesia’s Suharto regime decided to intervene in the East Timorese civil war, invading the island in December 1975. On July 17, 1976, it officially declared East Timor Indonesia’s twenty-seventh province. Most countries in the world refused to recognize Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. Australia was one of the exceptions. Its support for Indonesia’s occupation of East Timor was arguably the most steadfast of all the nations in the world. Given its geographic proximity, its wealth of resources and sheer demographic size, Indonesia occupied a special place in Australian politics. In January of 1979, Canberra went as far as to extend de jure recognition of Indonesia’s annexation of East Timor. Indonesia had requested this step as a necessary prelude to Australian-Indonesian negotiations over the rights to exploit the oil and natural gas deposits in the Timor Gap—the seabed between northern Australia and the south coast of East Timor.

As the Cold War continued and Suharto’s power grip strengthened in Indonesia and internationally, no country dared to challenge Indonesia’s rule over East Timor. It was not until February 1997 that renewed criticism emerged. At this time, Kofi Annan, the newly elected UN Secretary General, appointed Ambassador Ramsheed Marker as his personal representative for East Timor. Marker was mandated to revive the negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia over East Timorese independence which had been ongoing since the very beginning of Indonesian occupation of East Timor. The real turning point, however,

323 Durch 2006, 393.
324 Ibid.
325 The UN Security Council publicly opposed the invasion, and the territory’s nominal status in the UN remained “non-self-governing territory under Portuguese administration.”
327 Chalk 2001, 1.
328 Durch 2006, 394.
came with the Asian financial crisis of 1997. It had a disastrous effect on the Indonesian economy and acted as a catalyst for the fall of the Suharto regime. Suharto was replaced by his vice-president, B.J. Habibie. Soon after his appointment, B.J. Habibie indicated that Indonesia would be open to reconsider the status of East Timor. He envisaged a “special status” for the territory, which would entail autonomy in all areas of government except defense, foreign affairs and monetary policy.\(^\text{329}\)

Core domestic forces behind Australia’s policy toward East Timor

Habibie’s announcement was received with particular interest by Australia’s Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer. Downer’s desire to get involved in the East Timor question was partly motivated by a personal yearning “to make Australia count in the world.”\(^\text{330}\) More importantly, however, Australian domestic politics over East Timor were increasingly beginning to unravel. In late 1997, Laurie Brereton, then the Australian Labor Party’s spokesperson on foreign relations, had fractured the long-standing bipartisan consensus on East Timor, calling for the first time in Australia’s history for a Timorese right of self-determination.\(^\text{331}\) By 1998, Downer felt that, if he let the issue go, he and his party would lose the political upper hand on a potentially important domestic topic.\(^\text{332}\)

The East Timorese question kept indeed engaged a curious coalition of left- and right-wing elements of Australian society. On the left side of the political spectrum, one would find labor organizations, human-rights NGOs, and other humanitarian societal groups. Given its brutal suppression of left-wing dissidents, labor organizations had long held intense

\(^{329}\) Durch 2006, 394; White 2008, 71.

\(^{330}\) Author’s interview with Hugh White, Canberra, November 2011; Downer had grown up in a diplomat family and had served his country as a diplomat before entering politics.

\(^{331}\) Fernandes 2008, 84.

\(^{332}\) Ibid.
suspicions of the Suharto Government. Humanitarian NGOs were shocked into action by the continuing political repression in East Timor, best exemplified by the Santa Cruz Massacre of 1991. On the right side of the spectrum was the Australian Catholic Church, which was chiefly motivated by concerns for its coreligionists in East Timor. Catholicism had been on a constant rise in East Timor—a fact on which the Australian Catholic Church prided itself. There were also Australian World War II veterans, who held a deep affection for the East Timorese people because of their generosity toward Australian soldiers fighting the Japanese in East Timor during World War II. In addition, Australian business lobbies were getting worried: East Timor was becoming an economic problem for Indonesia internationally. Concerns about Indonesian human right violations in East Timor limited Indonesia’s ability to get the international financial support it needed for its economic recovery after the Asian financial crisis, which had a direct impact on Australia’s trade interests in Indonesia.

All those individual groups were helped in their endeavor to raise awareness by a small but very lively community of East Timorese refugees in Australia, headed by their charismatic leader José Ramos Horta.

The Howard Letter

The prevailing domestic atmosphere led the Australian National Security Committee (NSC)—an inter-agency institution composed of key cabinet ministers—to discuss the East Timor question on December 1, 1998. Foreign Minister Downer took the lead in presenting the policy options available on East Timor. Under Downer’s guidance, Australia’s

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333 Connery 2010, 50
334 Howard 2010, 337
335 White 2008, 70
336 Kelly 2009, 488; Howard (2010, 337) writes that fears of public demonstrations in Australia had caused that no Indonesians president had visited Australia since 1975 while there had been 12 official visits by Australian prime ministers to Indonesia
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) had run a survey in East Timor proper and among the East Timorese expatriate community on how Habibie’s idea of a “special status” was perceived. The results of the survey suggested that self-determination was still the preferred form of government for most of the survey participants. As a result, Howard and Downer decided to send a letter to Habibie urging him to include in his proposal “a future act of self-determination.”  

To be clear, Canberra remained entirely convinced that East Timor should remain part of Indonesia. The promise of holding a referendum on self-determination some years down the line was merely viewed as a calming device—East Timorese hopes would not be completely shattered, and autonomy within Indonesia would not be perceived as totally definitive. And, “who knows,” Canberra thought, “with enough time to do the necessary prep work, say over five to ten years, the East Timorese might quite well reject self-determination at the ballot-box.”

Habibie’s reaction to the letter was distinctly negative. In an interview recorded years later, Habibie remembers his initial thoughts:

Howard suggested that I have to solve East Timor as other friends have solved their colonies [said with emphasis], prepare them for 10 years or whatever and then after that give them their independence. So as I read that I was upset. It is John Howard [said with emphasis], who makes me make a quick decision.

In his indignation, Habibie decided to make a surprise announcement to hold an UN-monitored referendum in six months’ time offering the Timorese the choice between

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337 Howard 2010, 341.
338 White 2008, 73.
339 Author’s interview with Chris Barrie, Canberra, November 2011.
autonomy within Indonesia or independence.\textsuperscript{341} If somebody wanted to order him around, well, this is what he got.

Habibie’s proposal represented a genuine Indonesian foreign policy revolution. To Foreign Minister Downer and Prime Minister Howard, Habibie’s announcement was completely unexpected. Its implications appeared daunting. A referendum in six months’ time? What would happen if East Timor indeed voted in favor of independence? Certainly, Australia would end up with another impoverished and conflict-ridden country right at its doorstep. The most likely scenario was indeed a protracted violent struggle between pro- and anti-independence elements in East Timor itself.\textsuperscript{342} The will for conflict on both sides was blatantly evident. On the one hand, Falantil, the guerilla arm of the Fretilin party, had been fighting a pro-independence insurgency campaign against Indonesia since 1975. On the other hand, the Indonesian Army (TNI) had sponsored the growth of a number of armed anti-independence militia groups. General Wiranto, then chief of the TNI, hinted that in the case of East Timorese independence the Indonesia military would not lay low: “We lost 8,000 of our men in East Timor,” he told Chris Barrie, Australia’s Joint Chief of Staff, at a meeting in Jakarta, “We cannot just pack up and leave now. This is an important issue.”\textsuperscript{343} Making things worse, Canberra feared it would bear the brunt of the blame if the situation indeed escalated. After all, it had been “the Howard Letter” that instigated B.J. Habibie to announce the referendum. As a result, Australian officials from the highest levels

\textsuperscript{341} Durch 2006, 395; White (2008, 73) reports that to this date it remains unclear to what extent Habibie’s decision to hold a referendum was caused by Howard’s letter. Habibie may well have been already contemplating fairly radical steps before he received it. He could presumably have reached that decision without Howard’s intervention, but, according to White, some anecdotal evidence suggests that a re-reading of Howard’s letter in late January provided the final spur.

\textsuperscript{342} White, 2008, 75.

\textsuperscript{343} Barrie, interview with author.
downwards felt an immense urge to contain any potential damage.\textsuperscript{344} All over sudden, East Timor became the top foreign policy priority of the entire Australian government—it absolutely required a good ending so that Australia would not look bad.\textsuperscript{345}

\textit{Contingency Planning}

As a first move, the Howard government thought of getting a UN intervention force ready to intervene in case things fell apart in East Timor. To watch UN planning up close and ensure that UNDPKO would not get distracted by other conflicts, in March 1999 the Australian Government dispatched Brigadier Mike Smith to New York. “We thought the UN could need some Australian help,” Chris Barrie told me, “and also somebody needed to watch Australian interests in the whole affair.”\textsuperscript{346} The Australian Government also envisaged that Mike Smith would serve as commander of the UN force; therefore, he needed to become acquainted with the UN machinery.\textsuperscript{347} He was also told to make sure that other Australians would occupy key positions inside UNDPKO, in particular, with regards to the logistics and finances of a potential operation.\textsuperscript{348}

In the meantime, the security situation on the ground in East Timor was growing increasingly violent. On April 6, 1999, anti-independence militias attacked a church compound in Líquica, killing at least thirty of the estimated 2,000 local people. In response, Prime Minister Howard arranged a meeting with Habibie to recommend deploying an international peacekeeping force to East Timor prior to the ballot. Habibie, however,

\textsuperscript{344} White, interview with author.
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{346} Barrie, interview with author.
\textsuperscript{347} High-ranking Australian military official, interview with author.
\textsuperscript{348} Ibid.
forcefully rejected Howard's suggestion.\footnote{Durch 2006, 399.} “No, no, no,” he told Howard, his position would become domestically “untenable” if he accepted such a force.\footnote{Kelly 2009, 498.} It would humiliate Indonesia and particularly the Indonesian military. Indonesia was well capable of taking care of the situation. Australia’s contingency plans thus went again underground. In clandestine cooperation with the United Nations, Australia planned \textit{Operation Spitfire}—an evacuation operation of all Australian, UN and other international personnel from East Timor if security collapsed during or after the ballot.\footnote{White 2008, 80.}

\textit{The UN ballot and its aftermath}

UNAMET, the UN mission to administer the East Timor ballot, deployed on June 11, 1999. It was a purely civilian mission in accordance with Habibie’s wishes. The bulk of its personnel consisted of UN staff accompanied by a small police force of approximately 270 police officers. The East Timor ballot was held on August 30, 1999. It was a remarkable event. At 5:30 a.m., an hour before the polls were schedule to open, would-be voters, dressed in their best attire, were already waiting in long lines at the polling stations. By 2:30 p.m., most of the polling stations were empty; most people already had cast their votes. Those Timorese who had fled their villages and towns bravely returned to the places where they were registered to exercise their right to vote, then quickly returned to their places of refuge. Overall, an astonishing 98.6 percent of the East Timorese population participated in the ballot.\footnote{Nevins 2005, 97.} Five days later, on September 4, 1999, the results were announced; 78.5 percent voted for self-determination. Almost immediately after the announcement, the anti-
independence militias unleashed a systematic campaign of terror. Extreme violence erupted, with gunfire, houses set alight, and thousands of East Timorese fleeing into the hills. After only few days, most of the buildings, utilities, and agricultural infrastructure throughout the territory were destroyed; almost the entire population was displaced, with over 250,000 transported by the TNI or anti-independence militias to West Timor—the part of Timor that was still under Indonesian control.\textsuperscript{353}

The unfolding events in East Timor attracted intense media attention in Australia. “It united the whole country,” Chris Barrie remembers, “all calling upon the government to do something.”\textsuperscript{354} Australia’s initial response was to mount \emph{Operation Spitfire} and evacuate Australians, UNAMET staff, media and as well as almost 1,900 East Timorese.\textsuperscript{355} It soon became apparent, however, that this was not enough. The real objective had changed to ending the brutal violence and stabilizing the security situation. Despite Australia’s foresight and insistence, the UN was not yet ready to deploy a full-scale UN peacekeeping force. Instead, some form of interim force was needed to intervene in East Timor.\textsuperscript{356} Internationally, Australia was perceived as the logical candidate to lead an \textit{ad hoc} peace enforcement operation. The Howard government, however, shivered at the mere thought of such a scenario. Canberra was afraid, both militarily and politically.\textsuperscript{357} Intervening in East Timor would mean going to war with Indonesia, without a doubt the most powerful player in South-East Asia; a country of over 200 million people, with an army of over 200,000 men,
25,000 of whom were stationed in East Timor. Australia’s Defense Force felt utterly ill-prepared for such an undertaking. The Australian Army could surely serve in a UN force, but to lead a military operation itself under the security circumstances then reigning in East Timor? Canberra thus turned toward the United States. In June 1999, the U.S. Military’s Pacific Command (PACOM) had approached Australia regarding the possibility of a U.S. peace enforcement operation if things went wrong in East Timor. As a result, Canberra assumed that the United States would be willing to take the lead on East Timor, with Australia serving as junior partner.

*Getting the United States on Board*

The initial U.S. reaction to the Australian proposal on East Timor turned out to be quite different than Australia had anticipated. “It’s your baby,” Bill Cohen, the U.S. Secretary of Defense allegedly told Howard following his initial request. Cohen represented the dominant view in Washington, D.C., which portrayed Indonesia as of great strategic importance to the United States, while East Timor was of none at all: Indonesia was thought of as “a potential counterbalance to Chinese power in South-East Asia.” Moreover, the U.S. had important business interests in Indonesia and a strong desire to see Indonesia’s democratic experiment succeed. If East Timor destabilized Indonesian

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358 Barrie, interview with author.
359 White 2008, 82.
360 Fernandes 2008, 90.
361 Connery 2010, 92; Kelly 2009, 508.
democracy—or worse, precipitated the break-up of that ethnically, religiously and geographically diverse nation—the costs could be astronomical.\footnote{Ibid.}

Upon his second attempt, Howard was rebuffed by U.S. President Clinton himself. “We’re very stretched,” Clinton said, “there’s a lot of resistance to us committing ourselves any further. We’ve got many thousands in Kosovo.”\footnote{Kelly 2009, 508.} Clinton’s decision to send U.S. troops to Kosovo had indeed cost him significant political capital on the Hill.\footnote{Blair 2011, 240. The eruption of East Timor crisis came the same day the White House was about to send legislation authorizing US$3.4 billion to cover the costs of the Kosovo deployment to a Republican-dominated Congress.} He was not willing to pick another fight with the U.S. Congress, where political opposition to an East Timor deployment ran deep. “We are carrying such a burden in the Balkans,” Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson was quoted as saying, “now to talk about marching off to another area of the world where there is no clear threat to U.S. security interests is wrong.”\footnote{Greenlees and Garran 2002, 240.} Nevertheless, information on the violence reigning in East Timor soon widely spread among the general public, U.S. religious organizations and humanitarian NGOs.\footnote{Author’s interview with Francesc Vendrell, Princeton, November 2011.} In a flurry of days, U.S. agencies received tens of thousands of e-mail messages.\footnote{Greenlees and Garran 2002, 245.} As a result, several Senators and members of Congress began to look at the issue. On September 8, 1999, U.S. Senators Leahy and Feingold introduced a bill obligating Washington to cut off all military assistance and block international loans to Jakarta.\footnote{Fernandes 2008, 94; Nevins 2005, 124.} Behind the scenes, Richard Holbrooke, the newly appointed U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, also lobbied President Clinton to get involved. More importantly, however, President Clinton felt the
heat of the international community. Australia was seriously taken aback by U.S. inaction regarding East Timor. “Whenever the Americans had been involved in a major operation, they had always turned to Australia seeking a contribution. We had been willing to make it,” Prime Minister Howard argued.  

“This was a violation of the ANZUS alliance. Australia was being dumped.” Foreign Minister Downer made this message public, appearing on CNN on September 7, 1999, to criticize the Clinton administration. The same day, Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres also made a bold move, forcing U.S. attention to turn to East Timor. He telephoned Clinton and threatened to pull Portuguese troops out of Kosovo if no peacekeeping forces were deployed. To make his point crystal clear, Guterres prevented sixteen U.S. military flights from departing the Portuguese airbase in the Azores islands. Finally, the Clinton administration came around. A senior U.S. official described the U.S. U-turn on East Timor the following way: “We don’t have a dog running in the East Timor race, but we have a very big dog running down there called Australia and we have to support it.”

As a first step, Clinton rang Howard to say the U.S. would make a “tangible contribution.” The U.S. would provide strategic airlift, intelligence support and logistics, and, most importantly, it would throw all its diplomatic clout behind Australia to make INTERFET happen, or what Prime Minister Howard called “an all-out diplomatic effort in

370 Howard 2010, 346.
371 Kelly 2009, 508.
373 Nevins 2005, 125; Greenlees and Garran 2002, 246; Fernandes 2008, 94.
374 Fernandes 2008, 94.
375 Kelly 2009, 509.
support of what Australia wanted.\textsuperscript{376} At the time, Australia’s greatest but seemingly most unattainable desire was obtaining Indonesia’s acquiescence to the deployment of a multinational force to East Timor.\textsuperscript{377} On several occasions, Indonesia had made it clear—even after the post-ballot violence—that any international military operation would be considered an invasion. “If the Security Council deployed troops against Indonesia’s wishes,” the Indonesian government announced, “they would be going as peace enforcers and would be met by the Indonesian armed forces.”\textsuperscript{378}

U.S. diplomatic leadership now changed all this. The United States pulled all diplomatic levers at its disposition to persuade Indonesia to acquiesce to INTERFET. The World Bank was instructed to freeze US$ 300 million that had been scheduled for disbursement to Indonesia the following week. The IMF was told to postpone a mission to Indonesia for discussions on its economic recovery program. That meant in essence that the IMF would not disburse some US$ 6 million as planned in mid-Sept 1999.\textsuperscript{379} On the military level, the U.S. government dispatched Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen to Jakarta. He warned the Indonesians against allowing conflict to break out between the TNI and any UN-sanctioned peacekeeping force. He spoke of “serious economic consequences” in case of Indonesia’s continued resistance to the intervention, also hinting that American forces were available to provide backup if necessary.\textsuperscript{380} The latter move added an additional dimension of U.S.

\textsuperscript{376} Howard 2010, 347.
\textsuperscript{377} Howard, 2010, 347; White 2008, 82.
\textsuperscript{378} DFAT 2001, 84; Australia also feared that without Indonesia’s consent no UN Chapter VII mandate would pass the UN Security Council. For long, Indonesia had been a highly respected member of the non-aligned movement. A foreign intervention gave off the impression of being a “failed state”—a humiliating image that Indonesia refused to accept. Many of Indonesia’s UN friends felt the same way.
\textsuperscript{379} Robinson 2010, 196.
\textsuperscript{380} Howard 2010, 346; Fernandes 2008, 94.
leadership support: strategic deterrence. The U.S. made it clear to Indonesia that any attempt to oppose INTERFET would meet an overwhelming response. The U.S. would be on Australia’s side or, as Ashton Calvert, DFAT’s political director, put it: “if you touch the Australians, the U.S. will come after you.” Admiral Dennis Blair, commander-in-chief of the U.S. forces in the Pacific, and General Hugh Shelton, the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, both informed the chief of the TNI, General Wiranto that all U.S.-Indonesian military ties were being suspended. At the same time, President Clinton publicly warned Indonesia that, “if [it] does not end the violence, it must invite—it must invite—the international community to assist in restoring security . . . it would be a pity if the Indonesian recovery were crashed by this.” Finally, in an emergency debate in the UN Security Council on September 12, 1999, U.S. ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke warned Indonesia that it faced “the point of no return in international relations” if it did not accept an international peacekeeping force.

The immense pressure on Indonesia eventually produced results. On September 13, 1999, Habibie informed Annan that he would invite a peacekeeping force of “friendly nations” to East Timor.

381 Howard 2010, 346.
382 White 2008, 83.
383 Kelly 2009, 511.
384 Fernandes 2008, 94.
386 Edwards and Goldsworthy 2001, 249.
5.1.2. COOPERATION IMPETUS

The key Australian motivation to bring additional countries on board with INTERFET was to deter Indonesia from opposing the force—militarily and politically. As mentioned earlier, the Indonesian government had publicly threatened that any international military operation in East Timor would be considered an invasion, while the TNI had warned the Australian military leadership that it was not willing to leave East Timor voluntarily.387 Many Indonesians also believed that Australia was seeking to humiliate Indonesia, demonstrate its own military prowess, and extend its dominion into the southern Indonesian archipelago.388 Australia was thus understandably reluctant to intervene unilaterally, particularly given that there was a real risk that other Asian countries and, more specifically, other Asian Muslim countries, would side with Indonesia against an Australia-led intervention. In this regard, Australia indeed felt especially vulnerable, as it had been struggling for decades with a feeling of “cultural isolationism” as the region’s sole western, white, and Christian country.389 Australia therefore pursued a two-tracked deterrence strategy. First, Australia insisted on the United States joining the coalition to increase the military deterrent power of the force; second, Australia worked tirelessly to bring as many other Asian countries on board with the coalition to soothe claims that this was a “white neocolonial intervening force” or, even worse, a Christian crusade against Muslim Indonesia.390

On the former point, John Howard recalls the following:

387 DFAT 2001, 84.
388 Coleman 2007, 258.
389 Chalk 2001, 1.
390 Ryan 2000, 54; Dupont 2000, 166; Greenlees and Garran 2002, 266.
I wanted America involved. It was an instinctive reaction. U.S. involvement would send an implicit but clear deterrent signal to anyone in Jakarta who might have considered resisting the intervention force.\footnote{Howard 2010, 346.}

On the latter point, Mike Keating, the head of military planning of Australia’s East Timor intervention, remembers:

If Australia would have gone in by herself, the Indonesians might have reacted differently but with twenty odd countries and a UN resolution, it would have been really difficult for them [Indonesia] to oppose the intervention.\footnote{Keating, interview with author.}

Interestingly, in contrast to many other security operations, the Australian government had no need to be concerned about legitimacy perceptions among its own domestic audience. The Australian domestic public favored intervention even more adamantly than its government.\footnote{Coleman 2007, 257.} Howard remembers,

I was basically being attacked by everybody for not invading the place. I said you can’t do that, you’ve got to get a United Nations mandate. It was elementary. It seems bizarre in the light of all the later comments that have been made about me and the United Nations.\footnote{Kelly 2009, 507; Howard refers to his commitment to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which was not authorized by a UNSC resolution.}

5.1.3. SEARCH PROCESS

In a telephone call on September 6, 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan formally asked Howard if Australia would be willing to lead an intervention in East Timor. Informal discussions on this topic had already been ongoing since the initial preparation of the UN ballot. Following Annan’s call, Australia’s search process for INTERFET participants took
full speed. Howard himself took the lead in this process. He recalls the period between September 6 and the start of the operation as one of practically living on the phone “in pursuit of both diplomatic and potential military assistance.” For reasons mentioned above, Canberra preferred recruiting Asian countries and, in particular, ASEAN member states as well as countries which had Muslim populations. In addition, countries with previous peacekeeping experiences and adequately trained militaries were preferred over countries lacking the latter. DFAT was requested to come up with a list of potential troop contributing countries (TCCs) that matched these criteria. DFAT officials were requested to inquire through the Australian embassy network which countries would be willing to participate and under what conditions. Resident foreign embassies in Canberra were also approached with informal inquiries about potential INTERFET participation. At the same time, the Australian military started to feel out its counterparts in Asia and around the world. It thereby tapped into the alumni networks of Australia’s military academies, which had a long tradition of training foreign military elites.

The initial reactions to Australian démarches were alarmingly negative. Most countries in the region feared that the separation of East Timor from Indonesia would worsen domestic political instability in Indonesia and might even lead to a complete disintegration of the archipelagic state, which could spill over into the entire region, thus jeopardizing political stability and economic growth for decades to come. East Timor was also seen as setting a

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395 Kelly 2009, 505-506.  
396 Howard 2000, 345.  
397 Connery 2010, 37.  
398 Connery 2010, 38.  
399 Dupont 2000, 164.
potential precedent for Western interference, using the norm of humanitarian intervention as justification, in the internal affairs of other Asian states.  

*The APEC Summit in Auckland and the UN General Assembly in NYC*

Roughly one week after Annan’s official request to Australia to lead a multilateral force, heads of states of the Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC) were scheduled to meet in Auckland for their yearly summit. An economic institution, APEC had never served as a forum to discuss political or security issues. Nevertheless, it became the decisive venue for Australia’s coalition-building efforts. Australia’s Foreign Minister Downer recalls: “I don’t know what would have happened without this APEC meeting.” In fact, Prime Minister Howard was able to schedule bilateral meetings with APEC heads of states at the margins of the summit to make direct personal approaches regarding troop contributions. The whole process of scheduling meetings unfolded in a surprisingly *ad hoc* manner. Howard’s assistants, who were with him in Auckland, contacted officers working at DFAT and the DOD in Canberra via facsimile to request with which countries Howard should confer. These officers suggested countries based on the information they had gathered through their diplomatic and military networks over the preceding weeks. Howard gained numerous “in principle” promises of support in Auckland. Overall, Howard recalls the APEC meeting as “another example of how the occasion of international meetings provides the opportunity for leaders to resolve issues in separate ‘corridor’ discussions, often quite unrelated to the formal agenda of the meeting.”

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400 Ibid.  
401 Kelly 2009, 509.  
402 Author’s interview with high-ranking Australian military official, Melbourne, December 2011.  
403 Howard 2010, 347.
On September 14, just one day after the APEC summit had ended in Auckland, the annual UN General Assembly (UNGA) opened in New York. Prime Minister Howard was personally unable to go to New York. Foreign Minister Downer thus stepped in, and took full advantage of the opportunities this international gathering offered to lobby foreign governments for INTERFET support.\textsuperscript{404} In New York, U.S. support also proved to be critical in bringing TCCs on board or, as one senior Australian official put it, “the fact that the Americans were committed to it meant that a whole lot of people put in forces which might not otherwise. Whenever the coalition started to look a bit shaky, somehow somebody talked to them and . . . people stopped wavering.”\textsuperscript{405}

\textit{Recruitment trip through South-East Asia and parallel developments in Canberra}

Immediately after the conclusion of the UNGA, the Vice-Chief of the Australian Defense Forces, Air Marchal Doug Riding, was tasked to go on a rapid tour of Southeast Asia and follow-up on the “in-principle agreements” reached by Prime Minister Howard and Foreign Minister Downer in Auckland and New York. Riding and a team of three staff officers were mandated to conduct detailed discussions in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei. The visit started poorly when the Malaysian Government changed its mind about contributing to INTERFET, and Singapore offered a much smaller group than anticipated. However, Thailand and the Philippines stuck to their promises (for negotiation details see below).\textsuperscript{406} Back in Canberra, two newly created institutions were put in charge to continue the negotiations initiated by Prime Minister Howard and Foreign Minister Downer. Those institutions were the East Timor Policy Unit and the INTERFET

\textsuperscript{404} Ryan 2000, 40.
\textsuperscript{405} Coleman 2007, 253.
\textsuperscript{406} Connery 2010, 38.
Branch, both located in the Australian Department of Defense. Their mandate was, among other things, to negotiate the specific role, size, and deployment timing of foreign INTERFET contributions—in other words, the technical details of the deployments. Most officers working in both units had no previous experience with the technicalities of force generation negotiations and thus were surprised by the range of demands the countries were making. Most of the technical negotiations were conducted by military officials (note that the preceding “political” negotiations had been mostly between diplomats and/or ministers and heads of state). Military representatives of many of the developing countries arrived with laundry lists of equipment and other services they required from the Australians before any deployment would be conceivable. The requests included, among other things, military kits (weapons, ammunition, vehicles, clothing, sunglasses, etc.), other random equipment such as refrigerators, strategic air and sea lifts, health services (e.g., health check-ups as well as health and disability insurance coverage). In fact, despite requiring the contingents to be capable of being self-sufficient for a minimum of forty-two days, a large number of troops, bordering on the majority, arrived in Australia with “pretty much . . . nothing.”

Financial Issues

To satisfy the latter requests, Australia sought to establish a UN trust fund. To emphasize the special role of the ASEAN contributors, Australia proposed that ASEAN countries would have first access to this fund. The Japanese soon indicated that they would be willing to contribute US$ 100 million to the fund. Nevertheless, the money first had to be

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407 Keating, interview with author.
approved by the Diet. Australia stepped in and agreed to meet the initial deployment cost of the various detachments.\textsuperscript{410} It also agreed to finance the entire Fiji and Philippines deployments.\textsuperscript{411} Overall, Australia donated AU$ 3.5 million in equipment to developing country INTERFET members.\textsuperscript{412}

5.2. BARGAINING ANALYSIS 1: Force Generation Negotiations Australia-Thailand

Thailand was the largest troop contributor to INTERFET after the Lead Nation, Australia, sending 1,580 service personnel to serve in INTERFET. This section traces in detail the Thai decision-making process regarding its INTERFET deployment. It examines why Thailand was chosen to participate in INTERFET, and how the bargaining process between Australia and Thailand unfolded.

5.2.1. THAILAND’S PREFERENCE STRUCTURE

Thailand’s deployment of over 1,500 troops to East Timor constituted a domestic foreign policy revolution. Prior to East Timor, Thailand had never served in any international peacekeeping operation. The domestic preference structure with regards to the East Timor operation is quite complex.

\textit{Thailand’s unidimensional preferences regarding East Timor}

The most fervent domestic proponent of INTERFET participation was the Thai military, which saw in the East Timor intervention an opportunity to broaden its range of activities, strengthen its domestic legitimacy, and gain international exposure and financial

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{410} Ryan 2000, 43.
\textsuperscript{411} Coleman 2007, 274.
\textsuperscript{412} Coleman 2007, 275.
\end{footnotesize}
resources. During the Thai democratization period, cumulating in 1997 with the promulgation of a new democratic constitution, the Thai military was forced to disengage from domestic political affairs. In November 1997, the newly democratically elected Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai even took the dramatic step of appointing himself as Defense Minister.\textsuperscript{413} The imposed political disengagement was accompanied by severe defense budget cuts.\textsuperscript{414} After decades of military rule, these were bitter pills to swallow. Many military officials felt unappreciated by society and that they had been relegated to “minor tasks.”\textsuperscript{415} Senior officers thus seized on East Timor as an opportunity to demonstrate that they were still capable of making meaningful contributions to a civilian-run government.

The Thai civilian government under Prime Minister Chaun Leekpai was, however, much less enthusiastic about East Timor than the military. In fact, it was utterly divided over the question of a Thai deployment to East Timor. While Thailand’s Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan quickly embraced the idea of Thailand’s participation in INTERFET, other members of the Chuan administration feared that East Timor would cause the disintegration or “Balkanisation” of Indonesia.\textsuperscript{416} This could have grave repercussions for Thailand, which was struggling with a potent Muslim separatist movement in its southern provinces.\textsuperscript{417} In addition, many Thai officials were tied to ASEAN’s doctrine of non-interference—in particular, the non-interference of Western powers in the region.\textsuperscript{418} Moreover, they feared for Thailand’s relationship with Indonesia. Thailand had important economic ties with Indonesia, the Southeast Asian economic behemoth. Bangkok was also

\textsuperscript{413} Ibid. This was only the second time in Thailand’s history that a civilian had ever occupied this position.

\textsuperscript{414} Phongpaichit 2002, 418.

\textsuperscript{415} Phongpaichit 2002, 417.

\textsuperscript{416} DFAT 2001, 141.

\textsuperscript{417} Dupont 2000, 164.

\textsuperscript{418} Edwards and Goldsworthy 2001, 251.
aware that elements in Indonesian society, in particular the TNI, would perceive a Thai deployment as a mayor betrayal, with potentially fatal consequences for ASEAN. The Thai Deputy Foreign Minister, M. R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, summarized it the following way: “We have always said that we don’t want other countries, especially the superpowers, to interfere in the region . . . The time has come to show that we can solve the region’s problems ourselves.”419 Finally, and most importantly, Thailand was still in the midst of recovering from the Asian financial crisis, which had shattered its whole economic system.

*Thailand’s multidimensional preferences regarding East Timor*

When the East Timor crisis escalated, Thailand’s Prime Minister Chuan had only been in office for roughly one and a half years. His premiership had been entirely dominated by efforts to contain the aftershocks of the Asian financial crisis, which had commenced on July 2, 1997, when the Bank of Thailand decided to float the Thai currency, the baht. In a matter of months the baht dramatically lost value, falling from 24.3 to the US dollar in June 1997 to 52.5 US dollars in January 1998. By the end of 1997, fifty-six Thai financial institutions had shut down. By the end of 1998, two million people had lost their jobs, and Thailand faced the worst recession in its history, with growth rates of -1.8 percent in 1997 and -10.2 percent in 1998.420 During 1998, private consumption went down by -15 percent, public consumption by -4.9 percent, private investment by -45.8 percent, and public investment by -19.6 percent. Export growth was reduced by -6.4 percent and imports by -35.5 percent.421

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420 Mishra 2010, 146.
421 Chadchaidee 2002, 197.
Watching the Thai economy’s brutal disintegration, the Thai business elites and the urban middle class soon demanded the removal of Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh. In November 1997, Chavalit resigned, and a reshuffle of minor parties enabled Chuan Leekpai to come to power. Unsurprisingly, Chuan’s key promise to his supporters was to better manage the unfolding crisis and restore the health of the Thai economy. He was assisted in this endeavor by some of Thailand’s most famous economists, such as Tarrin Nimmanahaeminda and Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi. During 1998 and 1999, Chaun spent his full attention and political capital on restoring Thailand’s external balance, plugging capital outflows and reviving confidence in the baht.

5.2.2. DETERMINANTS OF BARGAINING SUCCESS

In terms of military readiness, Thailand was Australia’s third preferred choice. Australia had good military-to-military relations with Thailand. Many high-ranking Thai military officers had received military training in Australia (e.g., Thailand’s Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn, who was a graduate of the Australian Royal Military College, Duntroon, in Canberra). Shortly before the escalation of the East Timor crisis, Australia had also conducted a military exercise with the Thai armed forces—the so-called Australian–Thai combined exercise “Chapel Gold”. Australia thus knew that Thailand would be able to do the job, although not as effectively as Singapore or Malaysia.

From a diplomatic viewpoint, however, Australia was aware that Thailand was in Australia’s debt. Approximately a year prior to INTERFET, in the wake of the Asian

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424 Author’s interview with Australian diplomat, Melbourne, December 2011.
financial crisis, Australia had provided a one billion dollar loan to Thailand.\footnote{Edwards and Goldsworthy 2003, 251.} This bilateral loan was disbursed alongside the IMF stand-by credit.\footnote{IMF approves stand-by credit for Thailand, Press Release, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/1997/pr9737.htm> Accessed 7 July 2012.} What is more, Australia was the sole Western nation lending to Thailand; the United States and Europe had proven to be very stingy in this regard.\footnote{Other pledges received were from Japan (US$4 billion), Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore (US$1 billion each), and Indonesia and Korea (US$0.5 billion each). Subsequently, China pledged US$1 billion, and the World Bank and Asian Development Bank announced contributions of US$1.5 billion and US$1.2 billion respectively.} In addition, just months prior to INTERFET, Australia had maintained staunch support for Thailand’s candidate, Supachai Panitchpakdi, as the new head of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Supachai had been up against the New Zealander, Mike Moore. Australia had gone to great lengths to broker a deal under which Supachai and Moore would divide the WTO directorship, consequently angering not only its closest neighbor, New Zealand, but also the United States, which much preferred Moore over Supachai.\footnote{Author’s interview with U.S. diplomat, Washington, D.C., March 2012.} The Howard government was aware that both diplomatic actions, the bilateral loan and support for Supachai, had generated considerable goodwill toward Australia in Thailand.\footnote{Dee 2001, 10.} In addition, Thailand was looking toward Australia for further help with its economic recovery.\footnote{Australian diplomat, interview with author.}

*Tying the Knots*

The Thai official political decision to make a substantial troop commitment to INTERFET took place at the APEC summit in Auckland.\footnote{Ryan 2000, 50.} Both the Thai Prime Minister Chuan and his Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan attended the summit. Prime Minister Howard and
also U.S. President Clinton, at Howard’s request, met Prime Minister Chuan at the margins of the summit. The conversation between Prime Minister Howard and Prime Minister Chuan was dominated by financial issues. Chuan said that Thailand was willing to deploy to East Timor, but only if Thailand’s deployment expenses would be defrayed.\textsuperscript{433} Chuan made it clear that, given the dire economic situation in Thailand, Thailand was incapable of shouldering a military deployment to East Timor on its own. Prime Minister Howard assured him that there would be resources available—either directly from Australia or from the United Nations Trust Fund.\textsuperscript{434} At Downer’s request, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright also arranged a bilateral meeting with the Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan during the UN General Assembly in New York. Albright further assured Pitsuwan that Thailand’s INTERFET deployment expenses would be defrayed.\textsuperscript{435}

\textit{Following-up on the Thai promise}

The Howard government sent Doug Riding, the Vice-Chief of the Australian Armed Forces, to Thailand to follow up on its troop promises. He arrived in Bangkok on September 16, 1999, and was cordially welcomed by about forty military and civilian officials in a banquet hall in Bangkok. At the meeting, Prime Minister Chuan solemnly declared that “Thailand has the honor to contribute 1,500 troops to INTERFET.” The high number of troops came as a great surprise to Riding and his delegation. It appeared that the Thai military was influential in determining the precise size of Thailand’s contribution. Because of its enthusiasm it had lobbied Chuan for a larger force than anyone had expected.\textsuperscript{436} The second surprise was that the Thais declared that they would be ready to deploy the next day. Doug

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{433} Cotton 2004, 126.
\item \textsuperscript{434} Greenlees and Garran 2002, 268.
\item \textsuperscript{435} Thai premier defends decision to send troops to ET, \textit{BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific}, 30 September 1999.
\item \textsuperscript{436} Ryan 2000, 50; Edwards and Goldsworthy 2003, 251.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Riding then offered Thailand the Deputy Force Commander position of the INTERFET operation.\textsuperscript{437} In the meantime, in Canberra, the INTERFET branch negotiated the technical details of the Thai deployment. The Thai ambassador to Australia insisted, in particular, on Australia covering, in addition to all other deployment expenses, the medical and disability insurances of the Thai troops.\textsuperscript{438}

\textit{Goodwill generates Goodwill: Overhauling Thai-Australian Relations}

In November 1999, Foreign Minister Downer traveled to Bangkok to come up with an agenda that would help Thailand get back on its feet. On Downer’s agenda were treaties to expand the Australian-Thai trade and investment relationship.\textsuperscript{439} What followed was, in Downer’s words, a complete overhaul of the Thai-Australian relations: “When I first visited Bangkok in 1996, the relationship bordered indifference. Now it was almost love.” Australia and Thailand soon started negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA)—a development, which, according to Downer, followed from Thailand’s engagement in East Timor.\textsuperscript{440} It was Australia’s third FTA ever negotiated. Overall, Thailand’s engagement in East Timor triggered a radical change of Australia’s perception of Thailand to the significant benefit of Thailand and, in particular, Thailand’s economy.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{437} Author’s interview with Australian military official, Sydney, December 2011.

\textsuperscript{438} High-ranking Australian military official, interview with author.

\textsuperscript{439} Author’s interview with Alexander Downer, Adelaide, December 2011; FED—Downer to visit regional Interfet partners, \textit{Australian Associated Press}, 12 November 1999.

\textsuperscript{440} Downer, interview with author.
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5.3. BARGAINING ANALYSIS 2: Failed Force Generation Negotiations Australia-Malaysia

Malaysia was Australia’s top choice to act as key troop contributor to INTERFET. Nevertheless, the negotiations failed, and Malaysia ended up sending only a few interpreters to the INTERFET staff headquarters. This section traces the reasons for the failure of the force generation negotiations between Australia and Malaysia.

5.3.1. MALAYSIA’S PREFERENCE STRUCTURE

When officials at the Australian Department of Defense first realized the importance of a substantive force contribution from regional partners, they immediately thought of Malaysia. As Figure 5.2 below illustrates, Australia had intensive institutional relations with Malaysia, including a military alliance—the Five Power Defense Arrangement.\(^{441}\) In addition, Malaysia qualified best in military and other technical terms: Malaysia had a well trained and well equipped military force, it was a largely Muslim country, it understood Indonesia’s native language, Bahassa, and it had a good United Nations peacekeeping record.\(^{442}\) Similar to Thailand, however, the Malay government was split in its support for a deployment to East Timor.

\(^{441}\) This was a series of bilateral agreements between the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, signed in 1971. The agreements were negotiated when Great Britain terminated its defense guarantees to Malaysia and Singapore in the wake of the Suez withdrawal of 1967.

\(^{442}\) Barrie, interview with author; Author’s interview with Bob Cotton, Canberra, December 2011.
Malaysia’s unidimensional preferences regarding East Timor

The Malay military was highly in favor of deploying troops to East Timor. Malaysia maintained extensive military-to-military relations with Australia. As mentioned above, both Australia and Malaysia were members of the Five Power Defence Arrangement, which foresaw Australia’s operation of an Integrated Air Defence System (IADS) based at the Malay airbase Butterworth. Outside military circles the mood was, however, very different. In 1999, Malaysia was governed by Dr. Mahatir—often considered “the father of modern Malaysia.” During his tenure, which lasted for twenty-two years, he relentlessly pushed for Malaysia’s modernization and economic development, but also for discriminatory policies favoring ethnic Malay over all other Malaysians when it came to access to higher education, government jobs and other privileges. In foreign policy terms, Dr. Mahatir was a staunch advocate of the third world, anti-colonial and, arguably, anti-western. He was a strong supporter of ASEAN as an institution that united South-East Asian countries and protected them from foreign interference by the West. In the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, Dr. Mahatir claimed that the western countries were rejoicing in and abusing Asian weakness.

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443 Cotton, interview with author.

Malaysia’s multidimensional preferences regarding East Timor

In 1999, the Australian-Malay relationship was at an extreme low point. In December 1998, Prime Minister Howard had cancelled his visit to Kuala Lumpur at the last minute because, the day before he was due to arrive, Dr. Mahathir had severely criticized the U.S.-led air campaign against Iraqi targets (Operation Desert Fox), in which Australia was participating. Dr. Mahathir hated the idea that “white people were bombing Muslims.”

The Australian Prime Minister’s office let the Malay Government know that “operations in Iraq were overshadowing the visit and thus Howard would prefer to come at a later date.” More importantly, however, Australian-Malay relations were tainted by the so-called “Anwar Affair.” Anwar Ibrahim had been Dr. Mahathir’s closest political ally. Toward the end of the 1990s, however, Anwar’s relationship with Dr. Mahathir deteriorated. In 1999, he was arrested for corruption and sodomy—most likely following Dr. Mahathir’s orders. Australia was the first country to publicize and condemn the arrest. Dr Mahathir was furious about Australia’s interference in his handling of the affair.

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445 Cotton, interview with author.
446 Ibid.
448 Hwang (2003, 277-282) explains this development by pointing out that Dr. Mahathir feared Anwar as a political competitor. Anwar had also taken a different view on governance and had attacked Mahathir regarding the widespread culture of nepotism and cronyism within his administration and the ruling party.
449 Cotton, interview with author.
5.3.2. DETERMINANTS OF BARGAINING FAILURE

The Anwar Affair was not yet over when the Howard government informally approached Malaysia regarding troop contributions. While the military leadership had sent positive signals to Australia early on and was ready to deploy, Dr. Mahathir rejected the request almost immediately. In his opinion, INTERFET would help Australia gain further influence in the region—a result he was loath to support. His anger against Australia was indeed so deep-seated that he even started to publicly lash out against Australia and the West more generally. He blamed them for the crisis in East Timor, alleging that President B.J. Habibie had been pressured to allow an act of self-determination, even though many East Timorese had reconciled themselves to integration with Indonesia. Dr. Mahathir also argued that it had been the worst time for Indonesia to make a decision concerning East Timor, because it was struggling to cope with the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis and a switch to liberal democracy, a messy and difficult business even under optimum conditions. He also accused the West of hypocrisy for opposing Indonesia’s occupation of East Timor while turning a blind eye to similar transgressions by other countries.450

Dr. Mahathir’s decision to refuse to deploy troops to East Timor had a racial and vindictive element to it. It was largely a product of Australia’s criticism of Dr. Mahathir’s handling of his political opponent, Anwar Ibrahim. It had nothing to do with lacking military equipment and/or pressure from Indonesia or the United Nations—arguments which have been advanced to explain Malaysia’s refusal to participate in INTERFET.451 The Australian ambassador to Malaysia at the time, Ambassador Bob Cotton, also recalls that Australia

450 Dupont 2000, 165; according to Edwards and Goldsworthy (2003, 251) the tensions rose so high that, Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan was sent to talk to Dr. Mahathir. The upshot was that Malaysia decided to contribute some thirty personnel, mainly interpreters, to the INTERFET advance force.

451 Cotton, interview with author.
refrained from using direct or indirect political or economic threats on Malaysia to deploy troops, out of fear that Malaysia would leak the incidents to the press. “Political relations were at such a low point,” Bob Cotton remembers, “that literally no political trust existed.”

5.4. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Drawing upon the narrative above, I suggest that the INTERFET case study provides further critical evidence to validate several assumptions of the Market Model.

1) **Heterogeneous preference intensities**: Preference intensities among INTERFET coalition members were heterogeneous. While Australia witnessed immense domestic mobilization which resulted in sharply defined preferences regarding the East Timor question, other coalition members, such as the United States and Thailand, were domestically split in their support for INTERFET.

2) **Deterrence concerns as cooperation impetus**: Australia’s cooperation impetus was largely determined by deterrence concerns. While Australia was willing to shoulder the financial costs and did not need to be concerned about legitimacy perceptions of its own domestic audience, Australia shivered at the thought of unilaterally “invading” Indonesia.

3) **Institutional ties minimize search costs**: Australia systematically approached potential troop contributors based on previously acquired information. This allowed Australia to minimize search costs. All countries in the region with which Australia was the most institutionally connected ended up contributing troops to INTERFET.

4) **Goodwill account minimizes domestic adjustment costs**: Thailand’s participation in INTERFET was most likely the result of Australia’s support for Thailand during the Asian financial crisis and Thailand’s WTO candidate, Supachai Panitchpakdi. It is unlikely that, given its grueling economic situation, Thailand would have participated in INTERFET otherwise. Because of its accumulated goodwill in Thailand, Australia did not have to

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452 Ibid.
incur any domestic adjustment costs to incentivize Thailand to join INTERFET.

5) Bilateral “Badwill” determines negotiation failure: Malaysia’s president Dr. Mahathir was angry with Australia because of its behavior in the “Anwar Affair.” Dr. Mahathir perceived the domestic political costs of a Malay participation in INTERFET too high because it might have given credit to Australia and thus indirectly strengthened Australia’s stance on Anwar.

The specific empirical observations per dimension are as follows:

5.4.1. PREFERENCE STRUCTURE

Australia experienced different forms and sources of domestic societal pressure at the various stages of the East Timor crisis. During 1998, the East Timor issue was supported by a coalition of societal groups including the socialist left, the Catholic Church, humanitarian NGOs, WWII veterans, and Australian business groups. The serendipity of such domestic coalition formation brought about the Howard government’s policy shift on East Timor. Once the Howard Letter had been received in Jakarta, forces inside the Australian government took over the lead in pushing the East Timor issue in an attempt to achieve “damage containment.” Finally, once violence broke out on the island, domestic mass mobilization in Australia forced the Howard government to react.

Few other INTERFET coalition members appear to have felt an equally strong preference intensity regarding the East Timor crisis. The exception is certainly Portugal, which experienced unprecedented mass mobilization when the violence in East Timor erupted. France also appears to have participated in INTERFET because of domestic societal pressures. The French Catholic Church lobbied the French government to involve itself in East Timor. In addition, the French military is said to have pushed for a French
participation in INTERFET because it desired to demonstrate the utility of French military installations in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{453} France thus dispatched from its navy base in New Caledonia a 500-troop-strong INTERFET force contribution. All other INTERFET participants, including the United States and Thailand, appear to have been less self-motivated by the East Timor crisis.

\textbf{5.4.2. COOPERATION IMPETUS}

Australia felt too politically insecure to undertake a unilateral intervention in East Timor. It was afraid that Indonesia would be able to criticize and even antagonize a coalition containing only “white” Australian forces. As a result, Australia went to great length to bring the United States, as well as other “non-western” countries on board with INTERFET. Mike Keating, the head of military planning for INTERFET, suggested in our interview that Australia’s cooperation impetus was largely psychological: “Our boys could have done the job and in the end they largely did it by themselves.”\textsuperscript{454} However, Australia wanted political back-up. Interestingly, domestic legitimacy perceptions were of no concern to the Howard government, as the Australian public favored intervention more adamantly than its government.

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\textsuperscript{453} High-ranking French military official, interview with author.
\textsuperscript{454} Keating, interview with author.
\end{flushright}
5.4.3. SEARCH PROCESS

Australian made systematic use of its institutional connections to search for INTERFET participants. Australia had “quality constraints,” insofar as it preferred to recruit Asian and, if possible, Muslim countries. In addition, Australia cared about the military capabilities of potential TCCs. The Howard government obtained information on potential TCCs’ preferences structures through its embassy network and alumni ties of foreign Australian military academy graduates. DFAT then produced a list of countries whose heads of state Howard and Downer would approach during the APEC summit in Auckland and the UNGA in New York. Overall, this approach allowed the Howard government to minimize search costs. Howard’s recruitment strategy proved quite successful. As Figure 5.2 above illustrated, those Southeast Asian states which were the most institutionally connected with Australia (New Zealand, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand) all ended up contributing troops to INTERFET. The only exception is Japan, which, however, largely bankrolled the intervention.

There is no evidence that Australia employed an “auction mechanism” to recruit INTERFET participants. Most participants were approached by Australia and not vice-versa. In addition, there is no evidence that Australia relied solely on “vulnerability” considerations when selecting bargaining candidates. In fact, countries which were highly dependent on Australian development aid (e.g., Papua New Guinea, and other Pacific Islands) were not approached for force contributions. Nevertheless, development and military aid metrics were included in the information that DFAT and the DOD received from its embassy network. These metrics thus formed part of the data that DFAT and the DOD used to approximate potential TCCs’ preference structures but were not decisive.
5.4.4. BARGAINING WITH THAILAND

Bargaining success in the case of Thailand appears to have been largely the result of pre-existing institutional ties between Australia and Thailand. These relations had engendered goodwill on the Thai side; Thailand was grateful for Australian financial help during the recent Asian financial crisis and Australia’s support for Supachai. The use of the “Goodwill Account” thus enabled Australia to minimize domestic adjustment costs. In the process of force generation negotiations, Australia did not have to face any extra domestic political costs.

Bargaining with Thailand also highlights the different bargaining stages of a force generation process. The first stage is political: heads of state make “in-principal commitments” to deploy forces. In the case of Thailand, this commitment was made by Chuan to Howard at the APEC summit in Auckland. The “Goodwill Account” arguably played a major role in achieving this bilateral bargaining outcome. Once a political agreement is reached, negotiations transfer to a lower, more technical level. Now bargaining revolves around deployment details, such as the type of troops and equipment to be deployed and the range of operational duties. In the case of Thailand, these negotiations were conducted by the East Timor Policy Unit and various Thai military officers. Other incentives were required to finalize the technical details of the Thai deployment, such as providing military equipment and healthcare check-ups.

The case study provides no evidence that Thailand would have participated in INTERFET without Australian influence. In 1999, Thailand was still struggling with immense economic problems which limited its interest in foreign security affairs. In addition, there is no evidence that Thailand was coerced into cooperation at any point.
5.4.5. BARGAINING WITH MALAYSIA

Negotiations with Malaysia failed because of a lack of political trust between Australia and Malaysia. Dr. Mahathir was furious that Australia had publicized the “Anwar Affair.” He felt politically insecure, and believed joining INTERFET would give credit to Australia, thus indirectly strengthening Australia’s criticism of how he had handled the demolition of his political opponent, Anwar Ibrahim. As a result, Dr. Mahathir perceived the domestic political costs of Malay participation in INTERFET as too high—a fact which limited the possibility of side-deal bargains.

The case study provides no evidence that Malaysia refused to participate in INTERFET because of “technical issues” (e.g., military overstretch). In fact, the Malay military leadership was willing and ready to deploy to East Timor. Moreover, there is no evidence that Malaysia refused to participate because it doubted Australian coercive capacities or that negotiations failed because of “technical” differences (e.g., differences over intervention strategies).

5.5. CONCLUSION

The empirical observations of the INTERFET case study also coincide with the expectations of the Market Model in at least three of the five dimensions described in Chapter Two. The theoretical predictions of the Market Model fit best with the empirical evidence when it comes to (1) the preference structure underpinning the INTERFET security coalition; (2) the cooperation impetus of the Lead Nation, and (3) the search strategy of the Lead Nation. With regard to dimension four I am again limited to two instances of bilateral negotiations (Australia-Thailand and Australia and Malaysia). Generalizing my findings to all instances of force generation negotiations is therefore counterproductive. During my field research,
unfortunately I could not find any empirical evidence for the fifth dimension (i.e., incomplete contracting).

The next chapter will look at the EU operation in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) to further maximize case variation and increase the breadth of empirical observations.