
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Defence Sub-Committee Visit to East Timor

5 August 2009

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

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Cover photo caption

A group of Timor Leste trainees at the Metinaro Training Centre

(Photo courtesy of WGCdr David Ashworth, Defence Adviser to the Defence Sub-Committee, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade)



Contents

- Foreword v
- Membership of the Committeevii
- Membership of the Defenceix
- Sub –Committee.....ix
- Visit Participants.....xi
- List of abbreviations xiii

- 1 East Timor 1**
 - Arrival and initial briefing 1
 - Defence Co-operation Program briefing 2
 - International Stabilisation Force..... 3
 - F-FDTL Training Centre Metinaro 3
 - Conclusion 5

- Appendix A – Tour Program.....7**
 - 5 August 2009..... 7

Figure 1	LTCOL Steve Ferndale welcomes the Committee to the Defence Co-operation Centre in Dili	2
Figure 2	The Hon Arch Bevis MP, The Hon Bob Baldwin MP, Mr Michael Danby MP and Senator Scott Ludlum receiving a briefing on the new facilities at Metinaro	4
Figure 3	Defence Sub-Committee members having an informal meeting with trainees at the English Language training facility at Metinaro.....	5
Figure 4	The Committee being briefed by the Commandant of the Timor Leste Defence Force Training Centre at Metinaro	6



Foreword

On 5 August 2009 fourteen members of the Defence Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade visited Timor Leste. The focus of the visit was the contribution being made by the Australian Defence Force to the current and future security of the country.

In view of the Committee's focus on nation building and self-sufficiency within the defence and security context, the Committee elected to visit Joint Task Force 631, the Defence Co-operation Program and the Timor Leste Defence Force Training Centre at Metinaro.

This visit enabled the Committee to gain an appreciation of how far Timor Leste has progressed since our previous visit in 2003. It is clear that with the support of several nations and a significant number of NGOs the country is making steady progress supported by a more stable security environment, following the tragic recurrence of violence in 2006.

It was clear to the Committee that the Defence Co-operation Program holds the key to a professionally trained organic Defence capability. The long term goal of enabling the country one day to contribute capability to support others overseas is a laudable aim.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Ambassador, Mr Peter Heyward, and his staff at the Australian Embassy Dili, the ADF staff at the Defence Cooperation Program and Brigadier Bill Sowry and the members of Joint Task Force 631. Their support and assistance ensured that this was a productive and informative visit.

The Committee is indebted to the Prime Minister for approving the visit and to the Minister for Defence for the allocation of an aircraft from No 34 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force without which the visit could not have been achieved.

Hon Arch Bevis MP
Chair of Defence Sub-Committee

Membership of the Committee

Chair	Senator M Forshaw	
Deputy Chair	The Hon D Hawker MP	
Members	Senator M Arbib (from 01/07/08 till 11/09/09) Senator A Bartlett (till 30/06/08) Senator M Bishop Senator M Cormann (till 23/09/08) Senator A Eggleston (till 19/03/08) Senator the Hon A Ferguson (from 01/07/08) Senator M Fifield Senator M Furner (from 16/03/09) Senator S Hanson-Young (from 04/12/08) Senator the Hon D Johnston (from 23/09/08) Senator L J Kirk (till 30/06/08) Senator S Ludlum (from 26/11/08) Senator the Hon J A L (Sandy) Macdonald (till 30/06/08) Senator C M Moore Senator K O'Brien (from 01/07/08) Senator M Payne (from 19/03/08) Senator N Stott Despoja (till 30/06/08) Senator R Trood Senator R S Webber (till 30/06/08) The Hon B Baldwin MP The Hon A Bevis MP	The Hon J Bishop MP (from 11/03/09) Mr M Danby MP The Hon J Fitzgibbon MP (from 15/06/09) Ms A Ellis MP Mr S W Gibbons MP Ms S Grierson MP Mr D Hale MP The Hon I Macfarlane MP Mrs L Markus MP (from 25/09/08) Ms S Mirabella MP (till 11/03/09) The Hon J Murphy MP (from 20/03/09) Mr R Oakeshott MP (from 20/03/09) Ms M Parke MP Ms K Rea MP Mr B Ripoll MP The Hon A Robb AO MP (till 25/09/08) Mr S Robert MP The Hon P Ruddock MP Ms J Saffin MP The Hon B Scott MP Mr K Thomson MP (till 15/06/09) Ms M Vamvakinou MP
Secretary	Dr M Kerley	

Membership of the Defence Sub -Committee

Chair The Hon A Bevis MP

Deputy Chair The Hon B Baldwin MP

Members

Senator M Arbib (till 11/03/09)

Senator M Bishop

Senator the Hon A Ferguson

Senator M Fifield

Senator M Forshaw (*ex officio*)

Senator M Furner (from 16/03/09)

Senator the Hon D Johnston

Senator S Ludlum

Senator K O'Brien

Senator M Payne

Senator R Trood

Mr M Danby MP

The Hon J Fitzgibbon MP (from 15/06/09)

Mr S W Gibbons MP

Ms S Grierson MP

Mr D Hale MP

The Hon D Hawker MP (*ex officio*)

The Hon I Macfarlane MP

Mrs L Markus MP

Ms S Mirabella MP (till 11/03/09)

Mr R Oakeshott MP (from 20/03/09)

Mr S Robert MP

Ms J Saffin MP

The Hon B Scott MP

Mr K Thomson MP (till 15/06/09)

Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Dr Margot Kerley
Defence Adviser	WGCDR David Ashworth
Officer Manager	Mrs Donna Quintus-Bosz
Administrative Officers	Mrs Sonya Gasper Ms Gillian Drew



Visit Participants

Chair The Hon A Bevis MP

Deputy Chair The Hon B Baldwin MP

Members

Senator M Bishop

Senator the Hon A Ferguson

Senator M Furner (from 16/03/09)

Senator S Ludlum

Senator K O'Brien

The Hon B Scott MP

Mr M Danby MP

Ms S Grierson MP

The Hon D Hawker MP (*ex officio*)

The Hon I Macfarlane MP

Mr S Robert MP

Ms J Saffin MP

Defence Adviser

WGCDR David Ashworth



List of abbreviations

DCP	Defence Co-operation Program
DCP HQ	Defence Co-operation Program Headquarters
F-FDTL	Timor Leste Defence Force
ISF	International Stabilisation Force
ISF HQ	International Stabilisation Force Headquarters

East Timor

Arrival and initial briefing

- 1.1 On 5 August 2009, the Defence Sub Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade was met at Dili International 'Nicolau Lobato' Airport, East Timor, by the Australian Ambassador to East Timor, HE Mr Peter Heyward, the Defence Attaché Dili, Group Captain Ralph Kettle, the Assistant Defence Attaché Dili, Lieutenant Colonel Ron Morley and the military affairs adviser to President Ramos Horta, Major Michael Stone.
- 1.2 Unfortunately, owing to pre-arranged Timor Leste Government commitments, it was not possible for the Committee to pay a courtesy call to the Government. Regrettably, the visit also coincided with President Ramos-Horta's late-notice commitment to attend the state funeral of former President Aquino of the Philippines.
- 1.3 The Committee was driven to the Defence Co-operation Program Headquarters (DCP HQ) in Dili where Ambassador Heyward delivered a background briefing on East Timor's progress and challenges since independence, an explanation of its ongoing relationship and links with Australia and a detailed briefing on the many organisations, governmental and non-governmental, engaged in East Timor's ongoing development.
- 1.4 The Committee were also briefed on the Country's neighbourhood and its resource base, economy and trade.

Defence Co-operation Program briefing

- 1.5 The Committee were briefed on the Defence Co-operation Program (DCP) by the Senior DCP Adviser to the East Timor Defence Force, Lieutenant Colonel Steve Ferndale. This briefing explained the DCP's role in assisting to create and sustain a professional military culture. A long-term goal would be to enable the East Timor Defence Force to reach a standard of training and effectiveness that could see them contributing internationally.

Figure 1: LTCOL Steve Ferndale welcomes the Committee to the Defence Co-operation Centre in Dili



Source Department of Defence

- 1.6 The Committee was briefed on the challenges faced and the methodologies being employed to overcome them. The briefing also explained how the DCP interacts with the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) and the Timor Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL).
- 1.7 The Committee were informed that the DCP's major projects included the establishment of the Specialist Training Wing, the Maritime Security Program, improvements to logistics management, communications capability and the construction of kit buildings. As an example of infrastructure development, the Committee was advised that the DCP's HQ building was constructed to Australian standard in just three months.

- 1.8 The Committee was also briefed on possibilities for future engagement and interaction between Australia and the F-FDTL that could include visits to ADF facilities, exchanges and engagement in wider Australian peacekeeping activities such as force preparation and deployments.

International Stabilisation Force

- 1.9 The Committee were driven to the ISF Headquarters at Camp Phoenix, Dili, where they were greeted by Commander ISF, Brigadier Bill Sowry and his command team from Joint Task Force 631. The Committee received a set of briefings covering the ISF's mission, tasks, organisation, disposition and challenges.
- 1.10 The Committee was informed that the ISF is engaged in static security tasks and patrolling in Dili and the regions. The ISF's mission is to: *support the Government of Timor Leste in maintaining stability and the development of its Security Sector in order to allow the continuing growth of Timor Leste as a stable economic nation.*
- 1.11 In furtherance of its mission, the ISF has a range of authorised tasks including the ability to provide Aero Medical Evacuation and to provide a range of reactive back-up capabilities to the country's authorities. The Committee was briefed on the close co-operation between the various organisations involved in the country's security under a whole-of-Government approach.
- 1.12 The committee were advised that the ISF's was becoming more engaged in liaison and nation building, with the NGOs, through the establishment and use of liaison officers.
- 1.13 Following a light lunch with a range of ISF's personnel, the Committee were driven to the *Nicolau Lobato* F-FDTL training centre in Metinaro. This road journey afforded the committee the opportunity to witness the conspicuous poverty and poor living standards experienced by many of the people, especially those who were deemed displaced persons.

F-FDTL Training Centre Metinaro

- 1.14 The Committee was greeted by the Officer Commanding Specialist Training Wing, Major Barry Rhodes and other centre staff who provided a tour of the facility and an opportunity for committee members to observe and meet the trainees. The Committee appreciated the opportunity to speak informally with the trainees and to discover more about their backgrounds and the events that had led them to join the Defence Force.
- 1.15 The Committee were shown the newly constructed facilities and briefed on the variety of training being conducted, including a comprehensive English Language Training Program. The Committee was advised that an expansion of this program is an integral part of the DCP strategy alongside the development of a training culture that will underpin a professional military culture.

Figure 2: The Hon Arch Bevis MP, The Hon Bob Baldwin MP, Mr Michael Danby MP and Senator Scott Ludlum receiving a briefing on the new facilities at Metinaro



Source WGCDR David Ashworth, Defence Adviser, Defence Sub-Committee, JSCFADT

- 1.16 The committee were then driven back to Dili International 'Nicolau Lobato' Airport from where they returned to Australia.

Figure 3: Defence Sub-Committee members having an informal meeting with trainees at the English Language training facility at Metinaro



Source WGCCDR David Ashworth, Defence Adviser, Defence Sub-Committee, JSCFADT

Conclusion

- 1.17 This visit was completed in a single day to minimise the overhead of hosting and providing security to a sizeable parliamentary delegation. The Committee was mindful of how busy its hosts are in assisting the new government in securing its future and continuing the task of nation building.
- 1.18 The committee were keen to visit and observe the DCP as a prime example of nation building and, while the program is not without its challenges, the progress is impressive. A stable and credible F-FDTL is an integral and critical part of Timor Leste's future and both the DCP and the ISF are key enablers.
- 1.19 In time, strengthening the F-FDTL will enable Australia and others to reduce their commitment to the ISF and other supporting infrastructure.

Figure 4: The Committee being briefed by the Commandant of the Timor Leste Defence Force Training Centre at Metinaro



Source: WGCDR David Ashworth, Defence Adviser, Defence Sub-Committee, JSCFADT



Appendix A – Tour Program

5 August 2009

- 0900 Arrive Dili International 'Nicolau Lobato' Airport – met by HE Mr Peter Heyward, Australian Ambassador to East Timor, Group Captain Ralph Kettle, Defence Attaché Dili and Lieutenant Colonel Ron Morley, Assistant Defence Attaché Dili
Arrival formalities conducted in VIP Lounge
No Government of East Timor Representation
- 0925 Depart Airport for Defence Cooperation Program Headquarters (DCP HQ)
- 0935 Arrive Defence Cooperation Program Headquarters (DCP HQ) – met by Lieutenant Colonel Steve Ferndale, Senior DCP Adviser to the East Timor Defence Force
- 0940 Brief by HE Mr Peter Heyward, Australian Ambassador to East Timor
- 0955 Brief by Lieutenant Colonel Steve Ferndale, Senior DCP Adviser to the East Timor Defence Force
- 1030 Depart DCP HQ for the International Stabilisation Force Headquarters (ISF HQ)
- 1040 Arrive International Stabilisation Force Headquarters (ISF HQ) – met by Brigadier Bill Sowry, Commander ISF
Brief by Commander ISF, Meet ISF soldiers, lunch at Camp Phoenix

- 1245 Depart HQ ISF for East Timor Defence Force 'Nicolau Lobato' Training Centre, Metinaro
- 1330 Arrive East Timor Defence Force 'Nicolau Lobato Training Centre, Metinaro - met by Major Barry Rhodes, DCP, Officer Commanding Specialist Training Wing
Briefs and Tour of Training Centre Facilities
Foci of the briefs and tour are: DCP constructed facilities, DCP staffs that live and work alongside their East Timorese counterparts at the Training Centre; and the non-operational ADF training and development commitments to East Timor
- 1430 Depart East Timor Defence Force 'Nicolau Lobato Training Centre, Metinaro for Dili International Airport
- 1515 Pre departure formalities at Airport VIP Lounge
Farewell by Ambassador Heyward and Group Captain Kettle
- 1530 VIP Aircraft departs Dili