

The Role of Indonesian National Air Force (TNI-AU) in Seroja Operation in East Timor (1975-1979)

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Abstract—Seroja operation is the biggest aerial operation that has been taken by Indonesian Military. Indonesian Air Force (TNI-AU) acts as the air elements that support the Seroja Operation. The purpose of this research was to find out: 1) the background and the course of the Seroja Operation in East Timor. 2) TNI-AU involvement of Seroja Operation in East Timor 1975-1979, and 3) the effects of Seroja Operation on TNI-AU. This study employed the historical research method by Kuntowijoyo. The first stage was topic selection. The second was the collection of primary and secondary sources. The third was verification or source criticism. The fourth was interpretation. The fifth or final stage was history writing. The results of the study were as follows. 1) Seroja Operation is motivated by a civil war that happened in East Timor. This operation began on December, 7th 1975 signed Seroja Operation. Seroja Operation involved all aspects of military power. 2) TNI-AU involvement in Seroja Operation in East Timor from 1975-1979 was as the air elements of air traffic rush. This air element is intended to carry out attacks from the air either direct attack or air fire support. East Timor operations always involved TNI-AU either as an element of the air force or ground force. 3) The effects of Seroja Operation severe consequence for TNI-AU. TNI-AU started to build back its air force elements. Purchasing a variety of fighter aircraft carried out by TNI-AU strengthened the air force. The arrival of the aircraft from Western block was in addition to strengthen TNI-AU also facilitating the operations performed in East Timor.

Index Terms—Seroja operation, TNI-AU, east timor.

I. INTRODUCTION

East Timor was once colonized by Portugal. East Timor was independent from Portuguese after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal occurred. Carnation Revolution reached the peak on April 25th, 1974 and caused a huge change in Portuguese social life as well as their colonies.

Decolonisation policy in East Timor caused the emerge of political parties there. They were *Uniao Democratica Timorese* (UDT), *Associacao Popular Democratica de Timor* (APODETI), and *Associacao Social Democratica Timorese* (ASDT). Yet, ASDT changed name to be *Frent Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente* (FRETILIN).

Those parties had different thought about the future of East Timor. UDT wanted an East Timor government under Portugal protection, APODETI wanted East Timor government joining Indonesia, while FRETILIN wanted East Timor government independent. Later, UDT and FRETILIN

formed a coalition to build an independent country. Yet, it did not last long. UDT the approached Indonesia with APODETI. The difference of political ideology in East Timor caused conflict for so long.

The parties who want to integrate with Indonesia asked for Indonesian governments's help to go against the radicalism of FRETILIN party. Indonesian government assign Indonesian Military (ABRI) troops to help the parties in East Timor striving for being the part of Indonesia. The operation was called as Seroja Operation.

Seroja Operation was the biggest aerial operation (*Linud/Lintas Udara*) that has been taken by Indonesian Military. It involved ABRI troops that consisted of Indonesian Army, Indonesian Navy, Indonesian Air Force, and police force. The whole troops took important roles in supporting the pro-integration groups against FRETILIN group who is contra-Indonesia, but Indonesian Air Force (TNI-AU) was the most dominating in succeeding Seroja Operation. Considering the landscape of East Timor which was dominated by rocks and hills, the role of Air Force is crucial.

This research aimed to identify the role of Indonesian Air Force in Seroja Operation. The Air Force was the key to the success of Seroja Operation in East Timor, like the deployment of *Parako (Para Komando)* soldiers, deployment of Special Forces Command from Air Force, even the deployment of the aircrafts of Air Force. The focus of this study was discussing the implementation of Seroja Operation in East Timor and the involvement of Indonesian Air Force in the operation in 1975-1979.

The period of 1975-1979 was chosen because that was the year when Seroja Operation started under the command of *Komando Tugas Gabungan (Kogasgab)*. In 1977, Seroja Operation was announced to be finished because East Timor had declared as safe and ABRI had reigned the whole area of East Timor.

II. METHOD

This reseach employed Critical Historical Research by Kuntowijoyo. The writing process took five stages of historical method: (a) topic selection, (b) sources obtaining, (c) verification (criticism, history, and validity of sources), (d) interpretation: analysis and syntetic, and (e) historiografi or history writing [1].

The author used three kinds of approaches. The first was geographical approach to analyse the landcape and natural condition of East Timor in 1975-1979. Geographical information was important as one of consideration in the

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process of planning and deciding the military strategy in Seroja Operation.

The second was military approach using the war theory of Carl Von Clausewitz. This approach was for explaining the military involvement of Indonesian Military in East Timor especially the Air Force (TNI-AU). The aircraft and soldiers of Air Force was helpful in supporting Seroja Operation as the integrated operation of Indonesian Military in East Timor.

The third approach was international relations based on Neo-Realist theory by Kenneth Waltz. It was used for analysing the relations among nations in 1970s [2]. The range of time in 1970s was the period of time when the Cold War between United States and Uni Soviet occurred.

III. RESULT

A. Timor Timor History (*Timur Leste*)

East Timor was the most East part of Timor island located at 8° 17' and 10° 22' latitude and 123° 25' and 127° 19' longitude. It was 32.000 km² wide. The area colonized by Portugal was only 18.989 km² from Timor island and Atauro island which was 144 km², and the area Oekusi 2.463 km² [3].

Most of East Timor was dry soil with bare hills. Green lands were only in some parts of it. The kind of soil here cannot absorb water well. Almost all of the rivers do not flow in the dry season, but overflow in the rainy season.

People in East Timor were Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, and native of East Timor with various ethnics and dialects of each language. The diversity was closely related to the colonialization era and foreigner interaction in East Timor [4].

East Timor island was first visited by Portuguese sailor. It was started when Indonesian sea were opened for voyage by Alfonso de Albuquerque (1509-1515). Not long after, Portuguese dominated the power over East Timor [5]. Portuguese influence East Timor both for exploiting the natural resources and for spreading their religion and glory. It was well-known as 3G (Gold, Glory, Gospel).

B. Conflict in Timor Timor

The conflict emerged by the outbreak of Carnation Revolution on 25 April 1974. The revolution was a military coup which was integrated in *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (MFA). The leader was General Antonio de Spínola aimed to overthrow the Prime Minister Marcel Caetano. The revolution changed the government in Portugal from dictatorship into liberal democracy. The Carnation Revolution also affect the colony countries, including East Timor.

Decolonisation policy conducted by the government of the new regime caused some new parties emerged in East Timor [6]. The very first party was *Uniao Democratica Timorese* (UDT) on 11 May 1974. Then, *Associacao Social Democratica Timorese* (ASDT) on 20 May 1974 was the next. ASDT was then changed into *Frent Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente* or more well-known as FRETILIN. The third party was *Associacao Popular Democratica de Timor* (APODETI) on 27 May 1974.

Beside those three big parties, there were two more parties emerged in East Timor: Labour Party (TRABALHISTA) and *Klibur Oan Timor Aswain* (KOTA). Trabalhista was formed in October 1974 led by Domingos da Conceicao Pereira and Paulo Freitas. KOTA party was formed on 10 November 1974 by Jose Martins [7].

These parties had different views in determining the future of East Timor. UDT party wanted East Timor's independence achieved gradually and under the auspices of Portugal. This was because the majority of the UDT members were residents of Portuguese descent. While APODETI party, KOTA, and TRABALHISTA East Timor government wanted to join with the Republic of Indonesia. In the other side, FRETILIN desired to be completely independent. Differences of opinion between the political parties resulted in a prolonged conflict which occurred in East Timor.

Indonesia was the only country with land territory bordered directly to East Timor. Certainly Indonesian government did not want the conflict there affect Indonesian territory. The uncertain political conflict triggered Indonesian government to set up some strategy for anticipating all possibilities might happen. In the middle of 1974, Indonesian government formed a joint intelligence unit called the State Intelligence Coordinating Agency (BAKIN), which aimed to prepare all the necessary steps to face changes of East Timor society. The code for this intelligence unit was named 'Operasi Komodo'. The operation was led by the head of BAKIN named Lieutenant General Yoga Sugomo [8].

On 20 January 1975, Fretilin and UDT teamed up and formed a coalition in order to establish an independent state East Timor [9]. The coalition built a huge political power in East Timor, considering UDT mass is bigger than other political parties. This party got so much support from the colonial government officers, especially the Whites [10].

Apodeti refused to join UDT and Fretilin, because their purpose was not in line with the dream of Apodeti party and East Timor folks. The refusal caused Apodeti assumed as nation betrayer. The following is quotation from Yoga Sugomo as the head of BAKIN and chief of Komodo Operation in the Progress Report of Komodo Campaign Command 1975:

Issues were spread around Timor Portugues by FRETILIN and UDT to APODETI, such as: APODETI was accused as illegal party and nation betrayer, APODETI sold the country, APODETI worked with the neo-colonialist (it means Indonesia). That was why this party should be eradicated [11].

Since the coalition of Fretilin and UDT was formed, the action of raid, torture, and burning Apodeti members' house were spread and getting severe. People who had member card of Apodeti were forced to change it into Fretilin or UDT.

Yet, not long after the coalition was formed, both parties were separated again. The coalition cannot last longer because UDT party realized that their coalition was only a trap. In a radio broadcast on May 2, 1975, Fretilin declared that UDT attacked Fretilin. UDT also clarified the separation by the published declaration on May 27, 1975. After that attack and recrimination made the condition in East Timor unstable and chaotic.

Being separated from Fretilin, finally UDT approached Apodeti in order to integrate with Indonesia. On June 1, 1975, the leader of Apodeti, Arnaldo Dos Reis Araujo, propose a petition for the integration. The petition was supported by other parties like UDT, KOTA, and Tralabalista. The text written in Portuguese stated that East Timor wanted to be the 27th province of Republic of Indonesia [12].

In the middle of 1975, the armed conflict in East Timor was getting more and more severe when Fretilin attacked the personages of UDT, Apodeti, KOTA, and Tralabalista. The leaders of those parties were kidnapped and murdered, some of them was forced to work with them.

The prolonged conflict in East Timor made Indonesia worried and prepared a *Flamboyant* Operation on Juli 1975. The team was assigned to spy to East Timor, to recruit local military, and to prepare the base for the open military operation, if anytime the big war might happen [13]. *Flamboyant* Team consisted of Kopassandha members led by Colonel Infantry Dading Kalbudi. The movement of this operation was covert and closed.

Later, in the process, Indonesian government published a policy through a decree of the Minister of Defense Panggab Number: Skep/1063/VIII/1975 on August 31. Through the decree, the operation conducted by the State Intelligence Coordination (BAKIN) was replaced by the Joint Task Force Command (KOGASGAB). It consisted of the Indonesian Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The peak of the conflict in East Timor happened in November 1975 when Fretilin unilaterally declared the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor. The action was rejected by four other parties. Until November 30, 1975, the four political parties (UDT, Apodeti, KOTA, and Tralabalista) declared the proclamation of East Timor independence through the intergration of Republic of Indonesia [14]. The proclamation text was signed in Balibo thus it was well-known as Balibo Declaration. The declaration text was then handed over to Minister of Internal Affairs Adam Malik on December 1, 1975. The Declaration text mentioned clearly that the folks in East Timor desired to unite with Indonesian folks.

This has been the basis for Indonesian government to provide military assistance in the process of integrating East Timor with Indonesia. The Indonesian government changed the foreign policy on East Timor problem and made a political approach through military action. Indonesian government took military action because the conflict in East Timor was getting out of control and Indonesia did not want the conflict affect the stability of Indonesian government [15]. Thus, on December 7, 1975 Indonesian government openly sent military force to East Timor with the code *SEROJA* Operation.

C. *Seroja* Operation 1975

In the middle of 1975, the armed conflict in East Timor heated up, especially between Fretilin and the joint forces of UDT, Apodeti, Kota, and Tralabalista. The highlight of this conflict occurred in November 1975 when Fretilin had declared the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor. The joint forces refused and declared the integration of East Timor with Indonesia instead. The declaration was

signed in Balibo and well-known as Balibo declaration. This declaration became the basis for Indonesian government to change the politic direction. The political policy before was to strengthen the borders area. It was then changed into an open military operation for the East Timor integration process to Indonesia.

Seroja Operation was the biggest military operation in the New Order (ORBA) era. It was a joint force from the Indonesian Army, Navy, and Air Force. All forces and power involved in supporting the success of *Seroja* Operation. It fully replaced the *Komodo* and *Flamboyant* Operations.

Seroja operation was under the control of *Seroja* Joint Task Command (KOGASGAB). *Kogasgab Seroja* was formed on August 31 by the Decree of the Minister of Defense Panggab Number: Skep / 1063 / VIII / 1975 [16]. *Kogasgab* team consists of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Commander *Kogasgab* chaired by Brigadier General Suweno.

On October 30, 1975 the Air Force formed the *Merpati* Task Force (SATGAS PIGEON). The purpose was to support the activities of the *Seroja* *Kogasgab* aerial activities. *Merpati* Task Force Commander was Colonel Pilot Susetyo. *Merpati* Task Force was in charge for the Airborne Task Strategic, Tactical Air Task Force, the Task Force Air Surveillance / SAR, the Air Transport Task Force Military and Non-Military Air Transport [17].

Seroja Operation started the initial attack operation on December 7, 1975. The open operation was at first conducted by attacking Dili which was the central of the city and government of East Timor. This strategy aimed to ease them taking over East Timor.

The operation of taking over Dili which was done in sudden in order to make the enemy having no preparation to face Indonesian force. Indonesian Army moved in land and deployed by C-130 Hercules aircraft. Exactly at 05.00 am, C-130 Hercules aircraft from the East deployed paratroopers over Dili. It did not take a long time for East Timor folks to control Dili successfully by the Indonesian military assistance. At 12.30 pm, Dili has under the joint force's power [18]. It was changed into the base of *Seroja Kogasgab* army post. This placement was intended to facilitate the communication and assistance, also to command all of the elements involved in the next stage of *Seroja* Operation.

IV. INVOLVEMENT OF INDONESIAN AIR FORCE (TNI-AU) IN *SEROJA* OPERATION IN EAST TIMOR 1975-1979

A. *Merpati* Task Force (*Satuan Khusus Merpati*)

The formation of *Joint Task Force Command (Kogasgab)* in Agustus 1975 made Indonesian Air Force form *Merpati* Task Force on October 13, 1975. The *Merpati* Task Force Air Force provided air support for *Komodo* Operation or *Flamboyant* Operation, before *Seroja* Operation started. *Merpati* Task Force serves as an element of the air force of *Kogasgab*. *Merpati* Task Force was under the command Pangkopatdara (Commander of Air Combat Command Alloy) Air Force. *Merpati* Task Force *Kogasgab* in the air force, used helicopters BO 105, SA-330 Puma, bomber B-26 and C-47 Dakota. These aircrafts were used to launch *Kogasgab* tasks in the field of air transportation, air rescue, air ambulance and

air fire support. This was in accordance with the duties *Merpati* Task Force written on SM-002 Operations Plan 1975, as follows:

Possibilities can be done by SATGAS MERPATI were: 1) carrying out Operations jump debriefing. 2) carrying out the landing operation debriefing. 3) performing medical evacuation operations. 4) conducting aerial reconnaissance operations. 5) conduct psychological operations, 6) implementing Direct Air Relief Operation. 7) carrying out MOBUD Operation. 8) carrying out SAR operations. 9) implementing Special Operation [19].

As the aerial element in *Seroja* operation, *Merpati* Task Force moved all the strength for the success of *Seroja* Operation. The list of Air Force aircrafts which was used in *Seroja* Operation in East Timor can be seen in the following table.

TABLE I: LIST OF AIRCRAFTS USED IN SEROJA OPERATION

No.	Name
1.	C-130 Hercules.
2.	Helicopter Puma SA-330
3.	B-26 Invander.
4.	OV-10 Bronco.
5.	A-4 Skyhawk.
6.	T-33 Bird.
7.	C-47 Dakota.
8.	Helicopter BO-105.
9.	Cessna-402.
10.	Cassa-212.

Source: Appendix "B" Letter Kasau Nomor: B/ -23/04/01/Diswatpersau on October 2002. Headquarters of Indonesian National Air Force (TNI-AU), List of aircrafts for *Seroja* Operation in East Timor.

Indonesian Air Force moved all the power to help the *Merpati* Task Force. The elements used included the Air Force, Force Storm Trooper, and elements of the General Staff and Air Force Staff Kotama.

B. The Seizure of Dili

Air Force gradually had done pre-positioning of troops before *Seroja* operation began and pre-stocking logistics of Iswahyudi Airport, Madiun to the Penfui Airport, Kupang, NTT as a base preparation. In *Seroja* Operation, every soldier Parako/Kopasandha carried an AK-47 (Avtomat Kalashnikova 1947, made in the Soviet Union) and each team had a RPG-2 rocket Yugoslav caliber 90mm and a light sniper.

Before the invasion of Dili was carried out, the air force had to have briefing in advance by Colonel Pilot Suakadirul as a flight leader. Briefing was held at Squadron-31 hangar. In the briefing, it was explained that the D-day was held on December 7, before sunrise. This briefing discussed issues including formation flying aircraft, altitude, heading time to target, the number of flight sortie, and the number of troops to be transported [20]. After finishing the briefing, the Hercules aircraft that would be used in the invasion of Dili left Halim Perdanakusuma, Jakarta to the Iswahyudi air base in Madiun, East Java.

After arriving to the Iswahyudi air base in Madiun, nine aircrafts C-130 Hercules was ready to run the operation. Once everything is ready, the aircrafts departed right at 23.50 pm. Lieutenant Colonel Pilot Suakadirul started operations with Hercules flew the T-1380 [21]. Nine Hercules aircrafts left the runway air base Iswahyudi Madiun in a row.

The aircraft moved eastward, passing through the area of Malang, Surabaya, Bali, and headed to Penfui, Kupang, NTT. Kupang became the point of attack directly to the city of Dili. The flights use a code *Rajawali* Flight [22]. *Rajawali* Flight consists of nine aircraft formations in the air with three hundred feet distance for the first plane to another and fifty feet to the top.

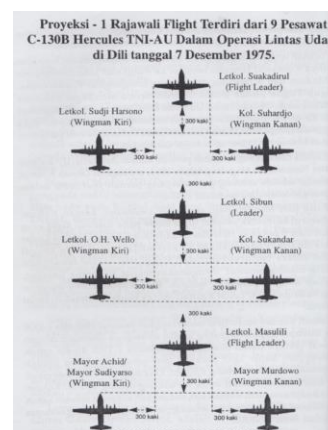


Fig. 1. Position of flying aircraft C-130B Hercules, the Air Force used in Operation *Seroja* in East Timor.

Source: Hendro Subroto, *Eyewitness of the Struggle for Integration of East Timor (Saksi Mata Perjuangan Integrasi Timor Timur)*, Jakarta: Sinar Harapan., 1996, pp. 128-129.

At 02.00 am, the nine aircrafts appeared from the east to the city of Dili. Dili attack was preceded by shelling from the sea by KRI (Warship of the Republic of Indonesia) *Martadinata*, *KRI Ratulangi*, *barracuda KRI Jaya Wijaya*, and *KRI Teluk Bone LST*. Target shooting was not inhabited area in the southern part of the Regional Dili. Fretilin is located in the city status later became 'alert'.

In taking over the Dili nine aircraft Hercules C-130 Air Force were used to sortie the soldiers to East Timor. The first sortie deploys 555 troops [23]. Because Fretilin troops in Dili had been ready, air force and military parachutist were fired by Fretilin troops from below. The shooting from below did not only hit the military parachutist troops but also the Hercules T-1312 which was flown by Colonel Pilot OH. Wello was damaged. Warrant Officer Wardjijo as Load Master of Hercules aircraft T-1312 was also shot in this incident [24]. In the first sortie, Hercules had no protection from the B-26 and AC-47 as the fighter aircraft. As a result, 78 members Parako/Special Forces did not get deployed [25]. Hercules then left Dili for Kupang to examine the state of the aircraft and set up a second sortie. Parachutist troops deployed in Dili directly involved in the battle against Fretilin and Fretilin troops were repulsed.

The second sortie involved five Hercules aircraft because four other aircraft were damaged and unfit to fly. This second sortie took off from the Kupang air base at 7:36 pm [26]. The target for the second sortie controlled the area Komoro, Dili. The second sortie troops were the troops from Battalion 502

and they got no resistance from Fretilin because Fretilin was repelled by the military forces.

Having deployed a second sortie, *Eagles Flight* was heading back to Penfui air base Kupang to prepare for the third sortie for deploying the rest Kostrad paratroops. This third sortie was for dropping troops on the west part of Dili. The third sortie was canceled, due to the lack of good coordination and also avoided the incidence of a second sortie. The airborne operation in Dili had freed Dili from Fretilin forces. However, three of Fretilin leaders (Jose Ramos Horta, Mario Alcatir and Rogerio Lobato) escaped [27].

C. Baucau

After the city of Dili were defeated by the the joint forces of the Armed Forces, the next target plan was the town of Baucau. Baucau was the second largest city in East Timor. Baucau had an airfield which is the biggest air base in East Timor [28]. Baucau would be seized by the paratroopers' invasion (Airborne) and the invasion of amphibious forces in the Laga area within 20 km in the Southeast of Baucau on the D Day + 3 or on December 10.

On December 10, 1975, 05:00 pm under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Pilot Suakadirul, *Rajawali Flight* with seven Hercules aircrafts carrying troops of Brigade 17/Airbase Kostrad, Kopassus, and Kooasgat from Penfui Air Base, Kupang. Hercules aircrafts were protected by Invader B-26 aircraft flown by Major Pilot Sumarsono [29]. Flight *Rajawali* always held radio contact with the B-26 Invader aircraft for coordination between transporting planes and warcrafts.

The first sortie carried 493 joint military forces. B-26 Air Force attacked in Baucau field and the surrounding before the flip was done [30]. The first sorties had no resistance by Fretilin forces, because Fretilin had fled to the southern part of Baucau airfield. Then, six Hercules aircrafts deployed troops again for the second time at same place, with the combined military forces fielded 414 [31].

Around 10:30 pm five Hercules C-130 aircraft were flown from Air Force Base, Kupang. The third sortie aimed to form the Tactical Command Post (POSKOTIS) airfield Baucau, including all the facilities. One of five Hercules aircrafts was flown to bring the logistic needs for war which was flown by Colonel Pilot OH. Wello.

Finally, the Air Force Base in Baucau was defeated. The airfield was successfully established and developed into a front line air base which was ready to support military operations.

After Dili and Baucau were defeated, the next Airborne invasions targeted Los Palos, Suai, Same, and Viqueque. Airborne invasion in Los Palos conducted on February 3, 1976. The operation was carried out suddenly. The paratroopers invasion in Los Palos on February 3 was at the same time with the amphibious landing ship by Battalion-2/Landing Marine in Lautem Beach [32]. This joint operation began the seizing of important towns in the eastern sector.

Six Hercules transported with a code *Rajawali Flight 400* joint forces. The invading army consisted of Battalion 330 and 501 as well as 15 members who would act as a Kopasgat, the Combat Controller (*Dalpur*). Paratroops were carried out

at the Los Palos airfield. After the combined forces of consolidation and then they moved to seize Los Palos. At the time, there was no resistance from Fretilin because Fretilin has moved already retreated to the South.

After Lospalos, the next Airborne invasion was Suai area. Airborne invasion in Suai employed six C-130 Hercules aircrafts that carry troops Kopassandha of Penfui Airport, Kupang. This deployment was done before sunrise. The force were deployed near Suai airfield so that they could immediately moved towards Suai. However, the invasion of paratroopers in Suai did not preceded with air strikes by the air assault bomber B-26 and AC-47 Gunship. Consequently, the paratroopers had an attack since it was floated in the air. Fighting in Suai lasted from morning till night non-stop. But at the end, Suai could be defeated by Indoneian Army.

After Suai, the next area was Same. Same was the capital of Conselho Manufahe. Incursion of the airborne troops in Same was done at night; the only deployment done at night during the air operations in East Timor. There were six Hercules aircraft were deployed, led by Brigade Raiders Kostrad army. Kostrad troops landed on the abandoned airstrip in Same. Airborne operation in Same faced no resistance because Fretilin troops had retreated from the Same.

After airborne operation in Same finished, the invasion was continued to Viqueque town. Troops deployed for Viqueque invasion were Kostrad troops and team members of *Kopasgat Dalpur* (combat controller). The movement of troops to the Viqueque town was in assistance of the air shot by AC-47 Gunship aircraft and bomber B-26 assault around the airfield and in some forests which was estimated to be Fretilin base. Air Shots aid is directed by the team of *Kopasgat Dalpur* [33].

In three months, ABRI (The Armed Force) had successfully controlled over towns which formerly was Fretilin base. Dili, Baucau, Los Palos, Suai, Same, and Viqueque were defeated by the military. Thus, it became the new chapter of the war. Fretilin members were forced back, ran to the forest to start a guerrilla war.

D. Matebian

It could be concluded that ABRI had defeated the whole territory of East Timor in 1978. The operation carried out by the Armed Forces into a manhunt operation (anti-guerrilla). Because the areas which were Fretilin basis had been ruled by the military, so Fretilin fled away to the forest and mountains. From hideouts, Fretilin started a rebellion and the Armed Forces had to chase them into the woods and mountains to conquere Fretilin. It was supported by some forces such as troops and appropriate Alutsista in which the circumstances and terrain were plausible for winning anti-guerrilla weapon.

Armed Forces in chasing Fretilin (anti-guerrilla) required a lot of equipment and needs. Ranging from logistical support flight path, air fire support (BTU), and aerial reconnaissance. All was done by aircraft T-33 A-10 T-Bird of Operations Squadron T-33 and OV-10 Bronco Air Squadron 3. Both planes are brought in Baucau airbase to support the military operation.

One of the toughest operations by ABRI occured in late 1978 was Matebian seizure. Matebian was a mountain range located in the south of Baucau. Matebian had two peaks, namely Matebian Mane and Matebian Feto. Matebian was the

toughest terrain in East Timor so that the place was functioned as Fretilin base in the eastern sector. Geographical character in Matebian was a high mountain with steep cliffs and the cool temperatures. The natural condition was become the defense for Fretilin.

Seizing the mountains with steep valley character and has not been untouched, Commander of the East Sector sent troops in large numbers. Elements involved in the joint combat seizing Matebian were the Army Strategic Reserve Command Battalion, Infantry Battalion, Territorial Battalion, supporting battalion, Marines, and Kopasga. Operation to seize Matebian implied the posse system, where all the battalions had their respective sectors and moved at the same time. It involved the aircraft T-33 Air Force, it was justified by MARSMA (Ret) Poengky Purnomo Jati [34], as follows:

"In 1978, we used the best T 33 only for six months for conquering Matebian. T 33 was taken off from Bacau (tactical operations). Operation was usually done in the western and central sectors. Eastern sector was left first. Yet, they (Fretilin) concentrated in the eastern sector of peak of Matabian. Then the plane was hit by T 33 so that they went down. Before Fretilin getting down, one battalion prepared to head off from the bottom [35]."

The aircraft T-33 Thunder Bird operated in East Timor with the code *Cakar Garuda* Operation, appearing with a new face that is painted dark green with shades snout shark [36]. T-33 was in charge of providing assistance to the Air Shot existing forces on the ground. In providing assistance fliers, T-33 usually set goals after the troops ashore signaled by firing mortars smoke.

The existence of the OV-10 and T-33 was the key to victory for Mount Matebian attack. Seizing Matebian including one of the major operations carried out armed forces in East Timor. The fall of Fretilin in Matebian notch made Indonesian military turned its attention to the rest of the Fretilin forces in the border of Ainaro-Manufahi and in the Dilor river valley. To clean up the remaining Fretilin forces in the border Ainaro-Manufahi and in river valleys Dilor also backed by BTU given Air Force aircrafts.

E. Parekesit I and II

Operation Parikshit I was held on December 2, 1978. Parikshit I operation was conducted by joint forces consisted of the Armed Forces Command Kopassandhan Marines, and Kopasgat [37]. The Task Force in this operation was led by Major Infantry Sitorus (Special Forces) as the commander and Major March Tatang S. (Marines) as deputy commander.

The Task Force was divided into three companies, namely the Bull Company (Kopassandha), Baruna Company (Marines), and the Bronco Company (Kopasgat). Bronco Company was led by First Lieutenant Suyitno PSK. The task for Parikesit I Operations was chasing the leaders of Security Disrupting Movement (GPK): Nicolau Lobato, Antonio Qurvarino and other figures. Parikesit operation I performed up to March 26, 1979. After Parikshit I Operation finished, all the involved forces returned to their respective units.

Parikesit II operation was a continuation of Parikesit Parikesit I Operation. The second operation carried out by the joint task force comprising troops from the Special Forces Command, Marine, and Kopasgat. The Task Force was led by

Major Inf Sunarto (Special Forces) as the commander and Major Mar Boy Malonda (Marines) as the deputy commander [38]. It aimed to clean the rest GPK in the forest.

It was conducted for four and a half months, from March to mid-July 1979. The Company was led by First Lieutenant Kopasgat PSK Hasibuan, whose members were from Battalions 461 and 465 Jakarta [39]. After it was completed, all the forces involved returned to their respective units. To appreciate the struggle of troops were promoted to get sergeant title.

V. IMPACT OF SEROJA OPERATION

The final stage of Seroja operations was carried out in the late 1978 and early 1979. The fall of Fretilin the last base in the region of Mount Matebian, Mount Kalbaki, Fatubesi, Emera and Alas made Fretilin weakened and the armed forces successfully controlled the whole East Timor. The death of the President of Fretilin, Nicolau Lobato on December 31, 1978 further gave reason for Indonesian Army to think that the battle had completed [40]. The development of situation in East Timor was initiating a further reorganization of the structure of the military organization in East Timor.

On March 26, 1979, Seroja Operation declared as completed by ABRI ([41]). It was constituted by declaring East Timor in a safe condition by the Armed Forces. Finally, East Timor joined as the part of the Indonesian territory. Along with East Timor declared safe, the military formed a Resort Military Command 164/Wira Dharma or Korem 164. Korem 164 is one of four Resort Military Command under Udayana Military Command based in Bali. The change of operation control in East Timor which was formerly held by the Minister of Defence and Security was given to the Udayana Military Command under the command of Defence Region II, which includes Java, Bali and Nusa Tenggara.

The operation was changed from an open war against Fretilin into the Internal Security Operations in the province of East Timor. This operation aimed to destroy the remnants of the Gang of GPK, improve defense and security and assist the preparation for the normalization of the running civil administration. The structure of military command in East Timor can be seen in the following table.

TABLE II: STRUCTURE OF MILITARY COMMAND IN EAST TIMOR

Time	Command	Big Operation
The end of 1974	Special Operation (Opsus)	Komodo Operation
early 1975	Assistance I/ Intelligence, Department of Defense and Security, supported by special forces Kopassandha	Flamboyan Operation
August 31, 1975	Seroja Joint Task Force Command Joint Operations (Kogasgab Seroja)	Flamboyan Operation Seroja Operation (invansion)
August 1976	Regional Command of East Timor Defence and Security (KodamHankam)	Seroja Operation
October 1978	Operation Seroja Joint Task Force Command (Kogasgab Seroja)	Seroja Operation Skylight Operation
March 26, 1979	Regional Military Command 164 / Wira Dharma (Korem 164)	Security Operation

		Scraping Operation Unity Operation
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Source: CAVR team. *Chega! Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor*. Jakarta: Gramedia Popular Library. 2010.

Operation Seroja also affected the National Indonesian Air Force. Condition of poor Indonesian Air Force in early 1975 started to be rebuilt. United States which provided military assistance and gun purchasing to Indonesia helped the Air Force to be stronger. Purchase of fighter aircraft comprised an OV-10 Bronco Squadron, the squadron F5 Tiger II, and two Squadrons of A-4 Skyhawk. The arrival of the planes was the new power for the National Air Force.

VI. CONCLUSION

The background and course of Operation *Seroja* in East Timor can not be separated from the eruption of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. Revolution led by General Antonio de Spínola makes a major change in the government in Portugal, one of which is a policy to liberate the colonies of Portugal. The emergence of political parties had different views about the future of East Timor prolonged conflicts in East Timor.

As a result of uncertain political upheaval in East Timor, the Indonesian government did everything to anticipate every possibility that might happen. Indonesian military operations in East Timor were called for Seroja Operation. Seroja Operation was an invasion Airborne operation ever conducted by the Indonesian military. This operation was performed on the basis of a petition from the people of East Timor to join the Republic of Indonesia.

The involvement of the Indonesian Air Force in Seroja Operation in East Timor in 1975-1979 affected the joint forces who served in operations in East Timor. *Merpati* Air Force formed a task force to support Seroja Operation. All the elements of power that include the Air Force, Kopasgat, General Staff, and Kotama Air Force were involved in Seroja Operation. Operations in East Timor had always involved the Air Force. The paratroopers invasion in Dili, Baucau, Los Palos, Suai, Same, and Viqueque deployed Hercules of the Air Force.

The impact of Operation Seroja in East Timor was experienced well by the Indonesian Air Force. The end of Seroja Operation on March 26, 1979 did not end the Air Force's involvement in East Timor. The operation which was formerly an open war against Fretilin changed into the Internal Security Operations in the province of East Timor. The Air Force was also involved in the operation aimed at clearing remaining GPK. After the military structure in East Timor composed, the Air Force was assigned to secure any Airports located in East Timor.

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