

Brazil's trade policy: toward triangulation

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On March 20th, President Obama touched down in Brasília for a two-day visit. While expectations of the trip were never high, the commencement of UN-authorized military operations in Libya overshadowed Obama's time in Brazil almost entirely. His public remarks consisted of clarifications on US policy toward Libya, with some interludes to address the tragedy in Japan, and little else.

President Dilma Rousseff can surely expect more personalized attention on her subsequent diplomatic engagement with a world power, a trip to Beijing in April. China has been Brazil's largest trade partner since 2009, and owing to China's apparently insatiable appetite for iron ore and soybeans, Brazil notched a US\$5.2 billion trade surplus with the People's Republic last year. Rio de Janeiro's improved port infrastructure and the inauguration of major transport networks across Brazil are prominent signs that trade with China – much of

it financed by China – isn't about to abate.

The narrative of "American decline" or "China's rise" can easily be grafted onto President Rousseff's diplomatic gambit. In February, Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota outlined the direction of Brazil's foreign policy, noting that ties with China would be given elevated status. By contrast, in March Rousseff challenged Obama to end the decade-long era of Washington's "empty rhetoric" about partnership with Latin America. China has eaten the United States' lunch in Latin America, and that seems unlikely to change.

But beneath the surface of Rousseff's avowals of continuity with Lula's policies and omnipresent signs of China's importance to Brazil, she appears keenly aware that there are problems in its economic relationship with China. More than 80% of Brazilian manufactured exports are being adversely affected by competition from China, according to one study. Says a spokesman for FIESP, São Paulo's Industrial Federation, "the relationship with China is important, but from an industrial perspective, it is extremely negative". Even icons of Brazilian industry have fallen prey, from shoemakers – who have seen the number of pairs exported drop by almost half since 2009 – to Rio's bikini manufacturers, who are howling over the prevalence of Chinese thongs strutting along Ipanema.

Brazil and America have found common cause in curtailing China's undervalued currency, the yuan. While China's currency remains artificially low, Brazil's *real* has appreciated about 40% since 2008, yoking Brazilian goods with uncompetitive prices abroad and at home. In February, US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner visited Brazil, where he veiled Brazil and America's efforts against China's managed yuan as an attempt to "work together on the global stage to build a more balanced and more stable, stronger multilateral economic system". Rousseff's advisors say lobbying for a stronger yuan will be a component of her Beijing visit.

Of course, in the past Brazil has also criticized the US Fed for its quantitative easing program, but Brasília's loudest rebuke of Washington concerns agricultural subsidies. Without reform or a grand gesture, Rousseff has shown no signs that she will differ from her predecessor on this score. However, if the Obama administration could send the right signal, a true alliance between the US and Brazil could bud from their common interest in a stronger yuan.

Probably the most meaningful way to do this would be for Obama to dismantle US agricultural subsidies, but this doesn't seem likely anytime soon because of the sway of the farm lobby and Midwestern congressmen.



Short of that, he could pledge a free trade agreement (FTA) with Brazil, but the romance around such a deal has soured across much of Latin America as the region has watched the Colombia FTA linger on Capitol Hill for almost five years. Frankly, the White House doesn't appear inclined to offer serious trade-related concessions to Brazil.

Still, Obama could offer Rousseff important political support. His public support for Brazil's right to a seat on an expanded UN Security Council could be enormous. He gave India such an endorsement last fall, to much fanfare in New Delhi. Doing so would cost Obama almost nothing, but it would buoy Brazil's national pride. To make further inroads Obama could woo Rousseff through regular contact at the highest level, wrapping cooperation around a theme if need be. Nicholas Gvosdev hit on this recently when he proposed an "Obama-Rousseff commission" akin to the Obama-Medvedev commission in 2009 that attended the "reset" between Washington and Moscow. Wrapping such a commission around a set of issues like energy policy, counternarcotics, and the aforementioned "multilateral economic" issues would add meat to the talks. But it's crucial that Obama and the likes of Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary Geithner be regularly involved. Idle talks dominated by lower-level officials would only convey Washington's antipathy.

President Rousseff's nascent foreign policy suggests a closer relationship with America, not out of starry-eyed naïveté or ideology, but rather because she is crafting a more strategic trade policy for Brazil – triangulation. By reengaging America after a decade in which the US and Brazil spurned one another, Brazil is moving ever so slightly back toward productive relations with the US as a means of insuring against the industrial winnowing begot by cheap Chinese imports. Piecemeal cooperation between Brazil and America over

China's currency provides a window for substantive US gestures that could beget more systematic cooperation.

The armies of common language: CPLP's Felino exercises

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The 'Felino 2010' military exercises which took place between the 19th and the 28th of March 2011 – scheduled for 2010, but delayed for technical reasons – had the purpose of organizing the joint action of the Lusophone armed forces within the 'peace support and humanitarian aid operations' framework of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP). The exercise is inserted in the joint and combined military exercises series – the 'Felino' – developed within the framework for technical and military cooperation between the member states of the CPLP. It has been occurring since the year 2000 with the objective of preparing the military forces of all CPLP member states, hailing from different continents, to intervene in areas of crisis.

This year's exercise took place in Angola, in the Cabo Lengo province of Bengo. It had the participation of approximately 1000 troopers, 850 of them from Angola – as the country is hosting the event – 20 from Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor Leste, 21 from Mozambique and 29 from Portugal. The exercise takes place in a fictional context, in an imaginary country called 'Quimbamba', which has been through decades of ethnic

conflict due to the old establishment of colonial borders, which divided ethnic groups, tribes and peoples who always understood themselves as 'one'. The result of this imaginary conflict was the disintegration of Quimbamba into four new countries, namely Quiçalândia, Bengalândia, Kwanzâlandia and Muxilândia. As this is the type of conflict international forces are supposed to intervene in, especially in the African continent, the importance and centrality of these military exercises is creating a new approach by providing the CPLP with a peacekeeping-oriented military capacity, instead of simply following the old common language rhetoric. Nevertheless, there are a few issues concerning the exercises and the broader ongoing cooperation that need to be addressed.

Firstly, it is important to understand the true objective and finality of these exercises. When the UN Security Council passes a resolution allowing countries or coalitions of countries to intervene in any situation in order to assure peace and secure human life, it usually does not attribute such important responsibilities to organizations which are based on cultural and historical aspects, but rather on military or economic groups and unions. In this, since all troopers come from Portuguese speaking countries, it should be expected that their actions may eventually be focused on any of the CPLP's member states. This means the armed forces of the CPLP country targeted for humanitarian or peacekeeping intervention by the Lusophone forces should not take part in that same intervention, as the CPLP should not, by principle, support any faction in a potential conflict, but rather work to solve the conflict and achieve peace. Since the armed forces of any country play a pivotal role in changing political regimes and/or supporting different factions in an internal conflict, any humanitarian or peacekeeping intervention by the CPLP would have one of its member states' armed forces opposing the rest of the



Lusophone forces. This imaginary yet plausible scenario would put the entire military approach on the spot, since it would sponsor divisions in the member states' military leadership, thus opening a path for other countries to either refrain from taking action or opting to support the armed forces of the country at crisis for any political or historical reason. If one or more Lusophone countries experience internal conflict and the UN requires the CPLP to intervene militarily in order to achieve peace, the consequences of such action could create a deep dividing line that would wreck years of political construction and investment in the organization itself. Collaboration between armed forces is much different than cultural, political or economic cooperation. Thus, this program must remain attentive to all possible positive and negative outcomes.

Secondly, although Angola is the host country for the Felino 2010 exercises, the training scenario looks fairly familiar to those who observe and think about Angola's territorial integrity. As explained above, the fictional country Quimbamba was broken into four halves due to decades of ethnic conflict. This was by large a consequence of the imposition of colonial frontiers, agreed during the Berlin Conference of 1884/85 which disregarded tribal groups and ethnic boundaries. However, many African Portuguese speaking countries still linger through these divisions, especially Angola. The colonial border which separated the Kingdom of Kongo and some of its vassal and neighboring kingdoms still projects remnants of identity and political secessionism in today's era. In the Lunda provinces, activists already demand more autonomy from the central government, a claim largely based on the existence of a significant pre-colonial degree of autonomy. Hence, it might not be a coincidence that the Felino 2010 exercises are focused on matters of secessionism and ethnic conflict. Although Angola will surely not be partitioned any

time soon, these are issues which require constant monitoring and preparation in order to address any possible outcome. If indeed there was a secessionist threat in Angola, the CPLP would be in a fairly well prepared position to act upon the issue. Yet, this potential intervention in an improbable scenario would considerably strain the actions of Angola's central government, which would in principle contain the secessionist movement at all costs and use its military to undermine separatists. Again, as explained above, the consequences would be negative for the CPLP.

Finally, there is still the weight of history shouldering the armies of the CPLP member states. During the colonial wars, most of those who fought against the Portuguese between 1961 and 1974 hold leadership positions in their country's government and armed forces today. Furthermore, most troopers from either side have at least one family member who fought in the war. History always has a personal touch when cooperation is attempted after conflict. Although many years have passed, the war is still fresh in the memories of many people, either by first-hand experience or by storytelling. The nationalist nature of many independence movements and the irony of cooperating militarily with the enemy of the past must always be taken into account if the CPLP's technical-military cooperation program is to have any success.

Although this military approach is a sound idea and, if properly addressed, a good mechanism for preventing conflict and achieving peace, there are still many nuances which require careful monitoring so as to avoid major diplomatic confrontations. Understanding exactly why, how, and what consequences a military intervention by the CPLP would carry should be the first priority of this program. Although highly dependent on the political scenario, it is not easy to foresee a peaceful political outcome for such a military

intervention, one that would bring an added value to having and keeping a military apparatus within the CPLP framework.

While it is still too early to analyze these concepts, it is much more important to define objectives, areas of intervention and reflect upon the political consequences. There is much at risk if any future CPLP military intervention brings division upon its members.



A road far from finished: Timor Leste and ASEAN

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At the end of 2010, expectations ran high in Díli. For all accounts, after years of unsuccessful lobbying, the accomplishment of Timor Leste's most illusive foreign policy goal – full accession to the Association of South Eastern Nations (ASEAN) – appeared to be back again in reach for the young nation. The reason in itself comprised no mystery. As Indonesia prepared to assume the rotating chairmanship of the regional organization, Timor Leste swiftly understood the significant window of opportunity that it was about to be given, in order to decisively set the drawn out process forward.

That much was made clear by the Timorese leadership: "If it is under Indonesia [that] Timor Leste joins ASEAN as the eleventh member at the summit in Jakarta in November 2011, it would elevate Indonesia's statesmanship, it would elevate ASEAN", President José Ramos-Horta said in Singapore during a seminar held by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.¹ Later on, Prime Minister José Alexandre 'Xanana' Gusmão followed the same line, when he declared in the III Bali Democracy Forum Bali that "it would be a cause for great satisfaction to all Timorese if our official request to join ASEAN is accepted during Indonesia's presidency in 2011".² The coordination between both officials could not have been clearer, as both emphasized the symbolism and momentum associated with this favorable set of circumstances for Timor Leste's aspirations.

Consequently, on March 4th 2011, Foreign Minister Zacarias Albano da Costa finally delivered in Jakarta, the formal membership application to his Indonesian counterpart, Marty Natalegawa. Understandably enough, a fresh look on Timor Leste's desire to join ASEAN thus becomes necessary. This article will therefore begin with a brief overview of the country's nascent foreign policy – including its preferential bilateral partners and multilateral venues – thus allowing for a

better contextualization of the ASEAN bid. The latest developments in this undertaking and the present obstacles of achieving it in the medium term will then be evaluated, with some final remarks regarding future prospects surrounding the accomplishment of such a goal.

A foreign policy built from scratch

One of the challenges that the Timorese had to deal with during the transition to sovereignty was the need to develop a foreign policy from scratch. In that sense, between October 1999 and May 2002, with José Ramos-Horta as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Timor Leste began setting up not only its foreign policy but also its own burgeoning diplomatic network.

At a bilateral level, Australia, Indonesia and Portugal were soon identified as Timor Leste's primary partners, with Jakarta as *primus inter pares*. Indeed, in the aftermath of the referendum, Indonesia was immediately identified as the main priority, as it was with Jakarta that Timor Leste had "a lot of issues: the border, customs, security and trade".³ In other words, the inescapable impact of geography was accepted and incorporated from the beginning within the foreign policy calculations. Moreover, for all purposes, Indonesia was always bound to be a key player and assume a role of gatekeeper regarding the future regional integration of Timor Leste.⁴ However, it was also in Díli's best interest to balance Indonesia's weight by keeping Australia and Portugal involved and interested in the country's future. Thus, as soon as possible, the Timorese embassies in Canberra, Jakarta and Lisbon were among the first ones to be operational.

On the other hand, the hierarchy of donors and peacekeepers, especially under the United Nations transitional administration, was also not forgotten. For

1 "East Timor leader pushes for ASEAN membership" (*Agence France-Presse*, 1 December 2010).

2 "East Timor hopes to gain ASEAN membership under RI's presidency" (*Antara*, 9 December 2010).

3 Mark Dodd, "Dili's biggest embassy to be in Jakarta" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 2001).

4 See Anthony Smith, "Constraints and Choices: East Timor as Foreign Policy Actor" (*New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, no. 1, 2005): 15-36.



example, the US, Japan, China and the European Union (EU) all received equal initial focus, as their development aid funds and generous loans were considered crucial to the sustainability of the recent nation. Moreover, important regional contributors with boots on the ground for the initial peacekeeping missions in Timor Leste, like Malaysia for instances, were granted a similar level of interest from the start. Overall, these countries and partners inevitably constituted Timor's immediate bilateral priorities and consequently, institutional efforts and resources were allocated to establish and/or reinforce official ties.

On a multilateral level, the first crucial objective was the UN. Indeed, Timor Leste's self-determination would be meaningless if not accompanied by full integration into the international community, and therefore accession to the organization's structural micro-universe as its 191st state member, on September 27th 2002, was naturally put on a fast track. Likewise, on August 1st 2002, Timor Leste also became a formal member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), seeking to deepen the Lusophone ties that allowed for an alternative international insertion framework. But as expected, Timor Leste also needed to take a good look at the surrounding region, for the choice of which institutional vehicle to join would surely mark the country's own foreign policy path for years to come.

At the time, the choice was not as clear as one would have expected. Although ASEAN remained the most successful regional integration project in that part of the globe, in the initial stages of Timor's transition, the possibility of joining instead another multilateral institution, the Australian-led Pacific Islands Forum – formerly known as South Pacific Forum –, was insistently floated around by local policymakers. An inherent distrust of ASEAN's decade-long complicity with the brutal Indonesian rule over the Timorese population provided some grounds to this argument, along with

the inescapability of institutionalizing the relations with Australia under some regular basis. Moreover, having to formally select an enduring and specific geographically distinct endeavor to join inevitably implied some difficult decisions, and therefore the evaluation of the costs and benefits associated with each and every option was found to be absolutely necessary. Curiously enough, then transitional Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta was in favor of this option, even though he did not exclude preferential ties with the Southeast Asian neighbors.⁵

But given that ASEAN did not allow shared membership with other regional institutions, Timor Leste had to inevitably settle this dilemma of choosing between affiliating the country either the Southeast Asia or the Pacific region.⁶

On the other hand, Indonesia also helped shuffle the deck of options when President Abdurrahman Wahid put forward, in late 2000, the ill-fated proposal to create a West Pacific Forum (WPF), which would have brought in both Indonesia and Australia, together with New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and naturally Timor Leste.⁷ However, the impracticality of such a vision as well as the lack of widespread interest in developing, yet again, another regional organization, soon prevented it from ever taking off.

Be that as it may, as soon as Timor Leste became fully independent, the country's new foreign policy goals were made abundantly clear. By ignoring the other options at the table, ASEAN would then officially become the main target of Timor Leste's external efforts.

A widespread and enduring campaign towards the accomplishment of this objective soon began to gain pace.

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5 "Ramos-Horta wants East Timor to join South Pacific Forum" (*Radio Australia*, 27 July 1999).

6 See Carlos Gaspar, "Timor entre a Ásia e o Pacífico" (*Janus*, 2002).

7 Kalinga Seneviratne, "East Timor: Nation-to-be goes from euphoria to pragmatism" (*IPS*, 28 December, 2000).



The long road to ASEAN

The confirmation that Timor Leste sought to refocus its attention on seeking ASEAN membership rather than any other regional integration project was reflected by Ramos-Horta himself, in the days leading up to independence. Indeed, in December 2000, he stated that ASEAN would “be the primary foreign policy goal of the future government” and that the organization was “important for the future of East Timor, not so much as an economic umbrella because we know that there are economic difficulties within the ASEAN countries, but as a means to attain security”.⁸ Indeed, the underlining notion that Timor Leste perceived its ASEAN bid as a prerequisite to its own security is quite significant in this process, specially since it provides a clear and official assumption that the regional context was in itself nothing but essential in the pursuit of Timor Leste’s own development path, at the time still plagued by uncertain leftovers from the transition period that threatened to jeopardize its own stability. However, such enthusiasm in quickly becoming a part of ASEAN was not entirely shared by the existing members. Extremely cautious reactions and vague tokens of support were given out, reflecting a region wary of further enlargements without the prior tackling of structural flaws that were very much in evidence in Timor Leste’s incipient society and that threatened to derail ASEAN’s own integration process.⁹ In that order, the following years failed to provide any serious development in the accomplishment of this goal, in part also due to Timor Leste’s internal constraints as it struggled to build a fresh state apparatus from the ground and grappled with persistent economic and social challenges. Timor’s regional participation was then resumed to an un-declared Observer status, with attendance of the organization’s multiple meetings resulting from the formal classification of “guest of the ASEAN chairman”.¹⁰ Moreover, despite the country’s best efforts to reignite

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the process, the final communiqué of the 39th Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 2006 constituted another letdown, as it gave a sense of widespread hesitancy, when merely agreeing “to Timor Leste’s participation, where appropriate, in functional areas of ASEAN activities”.¹¹ Nevertheless, Timor Leste was not backing down easily. For example, in 2005 it had already succeed in becoming a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, a wider multilateral dialogue mechanism in the Asian Pacific region that provided Timorese authorities with a first insight into a hectic regional framework. Furthermore, Timor also quickly moved on to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia on January 13th 2007, thus pledging to renounce the use of force and binding the country to a non-interference posture in the internal affairs of ASEAN member states. All in all, although not entirely conditional to a full-blown membership, these steps were seen as Timor’s way of expressing a steady commitment towards eventually reaching the desired status, and in that sense served the purpose of keeping its ‘campaign’ alive among its regional peers. Another crucial factor to take into consideration was the required development of bilateral relations between Timor Leste and all ASEAN members. If at first glance that ought to be no problem for a nation fully committed to such a regional project, having to ‘forcibly’ engage with Myanmar was for all purposes and for a substantial amount of time, a difficult obstacle to overcome. Indeed, Timor Leste’s political leadership long enjoyed a tradition of actively sympathizing with the struggle of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and its leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, while never abstaining from showcasing its support in international *fora*. However, given the need to engage with the region as whole, a more toned-down and constructive approach towards Myanmar’s military junta was soon demanded by the remaining ASEAN members to effectively advance Timor’s bid, and a normalization of ties between the two countries thus began to take place.

8 José Ramos Horta, “East Timor and the Region” (*Trends in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, January 2001).

9 “Asean reticent over East Timor” (*BBC News*, 21 May 2002).

10 “E. Timor wants higher status in ASEAN, but group says not yet” (*Kyodo*, 24 July 2006).

11 Joint Communiqué of the 39th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) (ASEAN, 25 July 2006).



Furthermore, the expansion of Timor's diplomatic representations to Bangkok and Manila also added further arguments to the country's regional bid, which then led to stronger assumptions that Timor Leste would eventually be able to join ASEAN in 2011-2012.¹² But with the years passing by, it was clear that goodwill and small political gestures would simply not be enough to move Timor's candidacy forward as many doubts remained in the minds of regional policymakers.

The hurdles along the way

In all fairness, the regional uneasiness towards Timor Leste's ultimate ambition is not without its fair share of reasons. Firstly, ASEAN still bears in mind the past experience of previous accessions to the organization's initial core of member states. Formed in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, the organization would eventually welcome Brunei Darussalam in 1984, followed by the 'nineties group', including Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997 and finally Cambodia in 1999. But a decade later, it is widely understood that the integration process of this particular last set of new members did not go that smoothly and is still far from over. For all purposes, the visible disparities between each country's economy and social progress inevitably led to its effectiveness being undermined, while including members such as Myanmar – "an albatross around ASEAN's neck"¹³ – had serious repercussions on its international legitimacy. Trying to regain some momentum, ASEAN is now officially putting all its energy, including financial and human resources, into reducing the economic and developmental gaps between the old and new members in order to even out the disparity as

much as possible when this grouping becomes a single free trade bloc as the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015.¹⁴

In such a context, there is a growing perception that an eventual Timorese accession would significantly cut the odds of this process as the country would automatically become one of the poorest members of the region, with a subsequent need for greater attention and focus that

could inevitably compromise any political-economic agenda that ASEAN might have in the coming years.¹⁵

Moreover, ASEAN already comprises a dense network of obligations and mandatory legislation which has to be adopted by every member state. However, as of mid-2010, Ramos-Horta was candid enough to admit that "no more than probably 50 per cent of the legislative criteria are in place" with Timor Leste "way behind readiness in terms of legislative work to conform to ASEAN legislation on issues such as migration, customs, security".¹⁶ Fears that the country might drag behind in this matter and eventually seek out some sort of temporary exemptions are therefore not without substance, with the added problem that other members could ask for such exceptions too due to domestic political pressures, thus complicating ASEAN's integration ambitions even further.¹⁷

Another particular issue also lies with Timor Leste's present human resources capability to cope with the frenetic level of meetings that

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12 East Timor Needs Five Years to Join ASEAN: PM (AFP, 27 July 2006).

13 Barry Desker, "Time for Asean to stand its ground" (Strait Times, 23 June 2010).

14 Thanida Tansubhapol, "E. Timor hopes to be 11th member bid to join ASEAN" (Bangkok Post, 1 March 2011).

15 Even though the Asian Development Bank foresees an estimated double-digit growth of 10% in both 2011 and 2012, it also warns that "longer-term prospects rest on using government investment to build human and physical capital and to trigger a transition to private sector-led growth", thus underlining some of the challenges that the country's economic growth and development are bound to face in the coming years. See "Asian Development Outlook 2011 (ADO 2011)" (Asian Development Bank, 2011): pp. 230-232.

16 Shefali Rekhi, "Timor Leste behind in bid to join Asean" (Strait Times, 17 July 2010).

17 Barry Wain, "Timor Leste's Bid to Join Asean Faces Objections" (Strait Times, 10 March 2011).



a regional organization of this kind requires. Indeed, estimates of around 300 summits and minor meetings every year are enough to exhaust the current members' diplomatic corps, let alone Timor Leste who has not even established diplomatic representation in all ASEAN capitals.

Amid all this, Myanmar has since changed its leading opposition stance. Gestures like the donation of US\$500,000 to the victims of the Nargis cyclone that hit the region and Timor Leste's less public foreign policy calibrations have certainly helped to downgrade any official objections on Myanmar's part.¹⁸ However, the main objections now appear to come from Singapore, a country frequently courted by Timor Leste for the last few years and with whom it consistently sought to develop a fruitful bilateral relationship. The fact that Singapore – often touted as a role model for Timor Leste's own development path – is apparently not entirely on board with this enterprise, speaks volumes on Timor's latest diplomatic endeavors throughout the region. Indeed, on May 2010, Ramos-Horta confidently remarked that Timor had recently secured the support of Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Singapore, combined with previous endorsements by Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines.¹⁹ Eight out of ten ASEAN members undoubtedly allowed for a certain degree of optimism. But as recent reports appear to indicate, the cited pledges of support may lack some substance in the short-term. In other words, they surely amount in theory to a growing wave of approval for the Timorese ambitions – reflecting generalized sympathy for the inclusion of one of the world's youngest nations into its fold – but when it comes down to a necessary consensual vote, Timor

Leste still might find that its candidacy does not yet have the required consensus.

Conclusion

Since 2002, Timor Leste has undoubtedly walked a long road in terms of achieving its foreign agenda. More so if one takes into account the visible structural shortcomings that were always bound to reflect on the country's goals of widespread international insertion, good regional neighborhood and nurturing of preferential relations with both Australia and Indonesia. Hence, against all odds but with many varying degrees of success and its fair share of critics,²⁰ it is safe to say that Timor Leste is now in a position to claim a relatively stable position in its targeted international context, with one notable exception: its long lasting ambition to join ASEAN.

In truth, its present undefined status is not really the result of a lack of Timorese effort or political will to advance this issue to a fruitful conclusion. The multiple visits by Timor Leste's leadership to the surrounding countries – designed to actively shore up the necessary support while showcasing the potential associated with including a 11th new member – figured prominently and constantly high in local discourse and in that sense, ASEAN membership was always consensually understood as the ultimate foreign goal by the local political class. From a Timorese point of view, the country played it nice, following the rules of engagement that the organization itself delineated, patiently awaiting a better timetable to decisively push the matter forward.

But given the formal steps recently taken, it is worth asking what makes 2011 so different from the past seven years, entitling Timor

Leste to a more favorable outcome? In one simple word: Indonesia. As it happens, Timor Leste's "policy of appeasement" towards its former ruler and inescapable neighbor has contributed to steady political-economic

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18 See Simon Roughneen, "Timor-Leste: Choosing Between ASEAN and Burmese Reform?" (*Irrawaddy*, 13 February 2010) and "East Timor keen to join ASEAN during Indonesian presidency" (*DPA*, 1 December 2010).

19 "Timor-Leste has support of most ASEAN member countries to join the bloc: president" (*Xinhua*, 1 May 2010).

20 See Pedro Seabra, "Timor Leste: the struggle for a balanced foreign policy" (*IPRIS Lusophone Countries Bulletin*, No.9, July 2010): 4-8.



bilateral ties, with direct consequences on the country's ASEAN bid.²¹ Indeed, hearing President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono state that "Indonesia is fully in support of Timor Leste's becoming member of ASEAN" undoubtedly confirms the transformation of Timor Leste's repressive foe into its most adamant and expressive advocate within ASEAN.²² Still, a question remains: will this be enough? Presently, Timor Leste is keen on the symbolism of opening formal accession negotiations while Indonesia holds the chair of ASEAN meetings during 2011. It would clearly send a message of full reconciliation to the entire region, but it would also leave the final decision on the membership status to a later date. Ramos-Horta, again, appeared to foresee this scenario by declaring "that more important is that we join now and then have a five-year period whereby we take steps, with ASEAN support, to fulfill any obligations, criteria that are still missing at the time".²³ A step-by-step approach some could say, although already within ASEAN's structure.

Nevertheless, despite the apparent feasibility of such a plan – yet to be tested or fully endorsed, for that matter – Timor Leste knows all too well, by past experience in dealing with ASEAN member states, that much is still undecided. Delivering the formal application was an important act by itself but it will be meaningless if Timor is not able to effectively present its case in a way as to placate some widespread doubts and provide a clear framework for future integration. Hence, for all purposes, Timor Leste's road towards full ASEAN membership is, most definitely, still far from finished.

21 See Dionisio Pereira, "East Timor's policy of appeasement towards Indonesia" (*On Line Opinion*, 14 April 2009).

22 "Indonesia to Help Timor Leste Join ASEAN" (*VIVAnews*, 9 December 2010).

23 "East Timor to Join Asean in Jakarta 2011" (*Agence France-Press*, 1 December 2010).



Timeline of Events

Angola

1 March (Luanda):

In the run-up for the March 7th demonstration, several government and MPLA members started to warn against participation in the rally. Interior Minister Sebastião Martins stated he would not tolerate public disorder.

1-5 March (Luanda):

An African Development Bank (AfDB) mission visited Angola led by its administrator Tombwele Pedro, to monitor the Bank's projects in the country. Since 2000, the AfDB has granted Angola US\$120 million.

2 March (Luanda):

UNITA, the Catholic Church and MPLA stated they would not join the March 7th demonstration. The MPLA, through its Secretary General Julião Mateus Paulo 'Dino Matross', warned against the "reiterated attempts to incite anarchy, disobedience, violence and subversion".

5 March (Luanda):

The MPLA promoted a "grand patriotic march for peace" nationwide. According to pro-government media, one million participated in the demonstration intended to support the ruling party and President José Eduardo dos Santos, who has ruled Angola since 1979. In a clear electoral mood ahead of the 2012 scheduled elections, it focused on the ongoing national reconstruction process.

6 March (Luanda):

During the night, around 17 people were detained by the police ahead of the March 7th demonstration. Among them were three reporters from the newspaper *Novo Jornal*. The authorities seem to have overreacted against the possibility of a protest rally which was never taken seriously by the major actors of Angolan political and civil life. The detainees were released within the day and declared they had not been maltreated, only questioned about their reasons for "rebellious against the system".

7 March (Luanda):

As expected, the demonstration, which intended to mirror the recent events in the Arab World, was a total failure. However, the MPLA

was unable to hide its anxiety during the whole episode.

7 March (Luanda):

In an interview to *Agence France-Presse*, Chinese ambassador to Angola, Zhang Bolun gave the first official estimate of Chinese lending to Angola. The Export-Import Bank of China, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, and the China Development Bank have credited the remarkable sum of US\$14.5 billion to the country since the end of the civil war in 2002.

10 March (Luanda):

According to the newspaper *Jornal de Angola*, under the Technical-Military Agreement, Angola will send a military mission to Guinea-Bissau until the end of March.

10 March (Caracas):

Venezuela's Oil Company PDVSA formally signed a contract to create Venangocupet, an oil production joint venture, with Angola's Sonangol and Cuba's Cuba Petroleo.

10 March (Luanda):

Speaker for the National Assembly António Kassoma praised and encouraged the cooperation ties with the EU through the ACP framework. EU chargé d'affaires in Luanda Rober Alder pointed out that, since 1985, the EU has disbursed some €480 million to Angola.

10-11 March (Luanda):

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Margot Wallström visited Luanda to discuss with Foreign Affairs Minister George Chicoty the rape allegations related to immigrant deportations to the DRC. Chicoty refuted these claims, while stating that deportation of illegal immigrants will continue, under bilateral agreements with the DRC and UN supervision.

14-16 March (Luanda):

Gambian Foreign Affairs Minister Mamadou Tangara paid an official visit to Angola. He was received by his Angolan counterpart George Chicoty, with whom he reviewed bilateral cooperation ties.

16 March (Luanda):

The government and the World Bank signed a US\$81.7 million loan to finance development projects.

17 March (New York):

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Margot Wallström called on Angola and the DRC to investigate allegations of sexual violence and adopt measures to prevent them, which should be done through "constructive dialogue and cooperation with the Congolese authorities".

17-18 March (Luanda):

Guinea-Conakry and Angola held their Bilateral Commission meeting. Among other topics, officials agreed on a defense and security cooperation framework.

19-21 March (Bissau):

An Angolan delegation, led by Defense Minister Cândido Pereira Van-Dúnem, visited Guinea-Bissau and met President Malam Bacai Sanhá, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior and Defense Minister Aristides Ocante da Silva. The visit was framed under the Technical-Military Agreement between the two countries and was intended to officially launch "Missang/GB" the Angolan support mission to the country with around 200 military and police personnel, on March 21st.

22 March (Luanda):

In an almost complete U-turn on Ivory Coast, Foreign Affairs Minister George Chicoty stated that although Angola continues to support dialogue to solve the crisis, Angola would align itself with the African Union's position.

22-23 March (Luanda):

Chinese Vice-Prime Minister Wang Qishan paid an official visit to Angola to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. Qishan met with Foreign Affairs Minister George Chicoty, Vice-President Fernando da Piedade dos Santos 'Nandó' and President José Eduardo dos Santos. During the visit, several cooperation accords were signed in economic and technical areas. One of the goals will be to establish the China-Angola Bilateral Commission in the near future.

29 March (Luanda):

UNITA Secretary-General and National Assembly deputy Abílio Kamalata Numa declared that UNITA would call for an anti-government protest.

**29 March (Luanda):**

Canadian military attaché to Angola Colonel Richard Milot praised the role of the country's Armed Forces in promoting stability in the region and in Africa.

29 March (Brussels):

Angolan Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Manuel Augusto attended the consultations between the EU and Guinea-Bissau, established by Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement.

30 March (Lubango):

Angolan Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Geraldo Sachipengo 'Nunda' defended the need for an urgent overhaul and reform of the country's military force.

Brazil

2-5 March (Brasília):

Timorese Prime Minister José Alexandre 'Xanana' Gusmão met with President Dilma Rousseff to assess and reinforce the ongoing bilateral relations, particularly in education, defense and security.

3-4 March (Beijing):

Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota travelled to China where he met with Vice-Prime Minister Xi Jinping, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Commerce Minister Chen Deming. Bilateral relations – such as trade, investment or scientific-technological cooperation – as well as President Dilma Rousseff's upcoming visit to China for the BRIC summit were high on the agenda.

3 March (Brasília):

Official figures were released pointing to a 7.5% growth for the Brazilian economy in 2010, the fastest pace in the last 24 years.

5 March (New Delhi):

Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota met with his Indian counterpart S. M. Krishna to review bilateral relations between the two countries in areas such as energy, agriculture, science and technology, education, culture and defense.

7 March (Colombo):

Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota paid the first visit by a Brazilian Foreign Minister to Sri Lanka, where he met with his counterpart G. L. Peiris and President Mahindra Rajapaksa. Reinforcing bilateral ties was high on the agenda.

8 March (New Delhi):

Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota returned to India to preside over the 3rd Meeting of the Brazil-India Strategic Dialogue along with India's National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon, and attend the 7th Meeting of the Ministerial Joint Commission of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue.

9 March (Doha):

Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota travelled to Qatar where he met with Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al Thani, and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, seeking to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries.

10 March (Montevideo):

Defense Minister Nelson Jobim met with his counterparts from Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay – Rubén Saavedra Soto, Andrés Allamand, Javier Ponce Cevallos, Cecilio Pérez Bordón and Luis Rosadilla respectively – as well as with Argentinean Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman and Uruguayan Foreign Minister Luis Almagro, on a meeting of Southern Cone countries that are part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Haiti.

11 March (Quito):

Secretary-General of External Relations Ruy Nunes Pinto Nogueira attended the Extraordinary Meeting of the Unasul Council of Foreign Ministers, celebrating the entry into force of Unasul's Constitutive Treaty and laying down the first cornerstone for the Organization's headquarters.

14 March (São Paulo):

Uruguayan President José Mujica, accompanied by a vast entourage of businessmen and governmental officials – including Foreign Minister Luis Almagro – travelled to São Paulo, seeking to enhance bilateral economic ties. Mujica and Almagro later met with Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota.

19-20 March (Brasília):

US President Barack Obama met with President Dilma Rousseff, seeking to lay a new path of constructive bilateral relations. Underlining such a will, several agreements were signed regarding economic and scientific-technological cooperation, although high-profile issues such as Brazil's aspiration to the UN Security Council were also addressed, despite Obama's lack of full endorsement.

22 March (Rio de Janeiro):

President Dilma Rousseff reaffirmed her country's view that a reformed UN Security Council without Brazil is inconceivable. As such "there will not be a reformed UN Council without some important countries such as India and Brazil", she said.

24 March (Geneva):

For the first time ever in 10 years, Brazil voted in favor of a resolution authorizing a special rapporteur to investigate possible human rights abuses in Iran.

25 March (La Paz):

Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota met with his Bolivian counterpart David Choquehuanca to discuss border issues, food production, energetic integration and the fight against drugs.

29-30 March (Coimbra):

President Dilma Rousseff attended former President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva's honoris causa degree ceremony. Nevertheless, Rousseff had to cut the visit short after the death of former Vice-President José Alencar.

30 March (Brasília):

Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and Environment and International Development Minister Erik Solheim met with Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota and signed a memorandum on bilateral political consultations.

30 March (Brasília):

According to a study presented by the Brazil-China Business Council (CEBC), investments by Chinese companies in Brazil exceeded US\$29.5 billion in 2010.

31 March (Brasília):

Denmark's Foreign Minister Lene Espersen met with her counterpart Antônio Patriota, in order to sign a cooperation agreement covering economy, trade, energy, climate change and political consultations.

31 March (Brasília):

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau Joseph Mutaboba met with Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota seeking to collect support for the ongoing international effort of stabilizing Guinea-Bissau's volatile internal situation.



Cape Verde

6 March (Praia):

The main opposition party, MpD, has formally thrown its weight behind the independent candidacy of former Foreign Minister Jorge Carlos Fonseca, for the upcoming presidential elections.

10 March (Praia):

President Pedro Pires formally inaugurated Prime Minister José Maria Neves for a third executive term, following the PAICV's win in the February legislative elections.

11 March (Praia):

PAICV's Basílio Ramos was formally chosen as President of Cape Verde's National Assembly.

14 March (Praia):

After a meeting of the PAICV's National Council, the party decided to endorse Manuel Inocêncio Sousa – current Minister for Infrastructures, Transports and Telecommunications – as its presidential candidate for the upcoming elections in 2011.

18 March (Praia):

Prime Minister José Maria Neves presented his revamped cabinet including new Foreign Minister Jorge Borges and new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs José Luis Rocha. Former ambassador to Spain Jorge Tolentino was appointed as Defense Minister.

23-25 March (Abuja):

President Pedro Pires and Foreign Minister Jorge Borges attended the 39th ECOWAS Heads of State and Government Summit. The ongoing crisis in Ivory Coast and Cape Verde's candidacy to the ECOWAS presidency were high on the agenda.

26 March (Addis Ababa):

The African Union formally appointed Cape Verde's former Foreign Minister as the organization's mediator for the current impasse in Ivory Coast. However, although his name was accepted by incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo, the winner of last year's presidential elections, Alassane Ouattara, refused to do so alleging that José Brito's "personal ties" with Gbagbo made him partial in this matter.

30 March (Lisbon):

President Pedro Pires attended former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva's honoris causa ceremony at the University of Coimbra.

31 March (Praia):

Former Head of Parliament Aristides Lima announced his independent candidacy for the upcoming presidential elections.

Guinea-Bissau

1 March (Bissau):

Two years have passed since the assassinations of then-President João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Tagme Na Waie. Although current President Malam Bacai Sanhá and Attorney-General Amine Saad promised a judicial investigation and a fair trial, to this date there have been no results.

9 March (Bissau):

President Malam Bacai Sanhá received a delegation from the Communist Party of China, headed by the Central Committee's Head of the International Department, Wang Jiarui. On the occasion, the President showed his gratitude for China's support to Guinea-Bissau, expressed his wish for a greater cooperation with China and stated he would recognize the one-China policy.

17 March (Bissau):

An IMF mission led by Paulo Drummond met with Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior.

19-21 March (Bissau):

An Angolan delegation led by Defense Minister Cândido Pereira Van-Dúnem, met President Malam Bacai Sanhá, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior and Defense Minister Aristides Ocante da Silva. The visit was framed under the Technical-Military Agreement between the two countries and was intended to officially launch "Missang/GB" – the Angolan support mission to the country involving around 200 military and police personnel.

21 March (Bissau):

President Malam Bacai Sanhá officially launched, alongside Angolan Defense Minister Cândido Van-Dúnem, the Angolan "Missang/GB" mission in the country. Armed Forces Chief of Staff António Indjai – a central figure in the April 1st incidents – pledged his "full support" to the Angolan mission.

21 March (Bissau):

Portuguese Ambassador in Bissau António Ricoca Freire recognized Angola's deep commitment and effort to support Guinea-Bissau. Although the diplomat recalled that Portugal's assistance to the Security Sector

Reform (SSR) process is currently suspended for evaluation, he showed total support for Angola's mission.

23 March (Bissau):

President Malam Bacai Sanhá received US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, who is based in Dakar, to whom he declared his opposition to the intervention in Libya.

23-26 March (Abuja):

President Malam Bacai Sanhá attended the 39th ECOWAS Heads of State and Government Summit, which was dominated by talks on the situation in Ivory Coast. The Summit approved a US\$63 million support fund to Guinea-Bissau – Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan stated that ECOWAS must actively support the implementation of the SSR in the country.

24-25 March (Bissau):

Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho met with Guinean authorities seeking to evaluate bilateral relations and assess the situation on the ground, on the eve of an EU review of its relationship with Guinea-Bissau.

29 March (Brussels):

The EU opened consultations with Guinea-Bissau as envisaged by Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior headed the Bissau-Guinean delegation. He highlighted the effort made by his government in the last two years to reform and build international credibility. Angolan Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Manuel Augusto also attended these consultations, as well as representatives from the CPLP, the AU and ECOWAS. In the end, Guinea-Bissau managed to avoid further EU sanctions, although it had to promise to restructure the Armed Force's top commanders, conclude judicial investigations in an independent and fair manner and pursue the Security Sector Reform. The EU will now ask for a chronogram for the implementation of these measures.

Mozambique

1 March (Maputo):

President Armando Guebuza met with Andrew Mayock, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Deputy Vice President for Compact Implementation, who reaffirmed the desire to work with the Mozambican government on initiatives to alleviate poverty. Current programs are budgeted at US\$506.7 million although only 7% has been disbursed since 2008.

**1-3 March (Maputo):**

Defense Minister Filipe Nyusi welcomed his Portuguese counterpart, Augusto Santos Silva, seeking to further reinforce bilateral ties under the framework of the Technical-Military Cooperation agreements.

3-4 March (Paris):

President Armando Guebuza travelled to France to attend the V Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Conference. Guebuza also took the opportunity to later meet with French Cooperation Minister Henri de Raincourt.

9 March (Maputo):

Finnish ambassador to Mozambique Kari Alanko announced that under a recent agreement, his country will donate €21 million to be handed over as direct Budgetary Aid in the 2011-2013 period in equal yearly amounts.

15 March (Maputo):

Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai met with President Armando Guebuza, seeking his support to establish a SADC-backed plan for new elections amid difficulties within the country's coalition government.

15-17 March (Maputo):

British Undersecretary of State for International Development Stephen O'Brien met with several government officials and announced that British aid to Mozambique will rise to US\$137 million a year as of 2013.

17 March (Maputo):

President Armando Guebuza and Foreign Minister Oldemiro Balói welcomed Portuguese Foreign Minister Luís Amado. Reviewing bilateral relations and preparing for the 1st high-level official summit between the two countries were high on the agenda.

17 March (Mbabane):

President Armando Guebuza travelled to Swaziland, where he met with King Mswati III, seeking to enhance bilateral relations and pursue a joint path of peace, stability and social well being in the region.

18 March (Maputo):

Japanese ambassador Susumo Segawa, and Minister for Industry and Trade Armando Inroga, signed a new deal under which Japan will donate rice to Mozambique valued at US\$10 million.

23-27 March (Hanoi):

Defense Minister Filipe Nyusi travelled to Vietnam, where he met with his counterpart

General Phung Quang Thanh and President Nguyen Minh Triet, seeking to enhance bilateral cooperation.

27-29 March (New Delhi):

Prime Minister Aires Ali attended the VII CII-EXIM Bank conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership, seeking to benefit from improved bilateral ties and attract Indian businessmen to his country. Indian Trade Minister Anand Sharma announced a new credit line for Mozambique worth US\$20 million and promises were made by India's Export-Import Bank to speed up the process of providing funds related to the US\$500 million credit line opened to Mozambique to fund development projects.

31 March (Livingstone):

President Armando Guebuza attended a meeting of the SADC Troika on Politics, Defense and Security, together with his Zambian and South African counterparts. All three leaders subsequently called for an extraordinary SADC Heads of State and Government Summit in May, in order to discuss the situations in Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

Portugal

1-3 March (Maputo):

Defense Minister Augusto Santos Silva travelled to Mozambique where he reviewed Portuguese efforts under the framework for the bilateral Technical-Military Cooperation agreements with his local counterpart, Filipe Nyusi.

2 March (Berlin):

Prime Minister José Sócrates, accompanied by Finance Minister Francisco Teixeira dos Santos and Secretary of State for European Affairs Pedro Lourtie, met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss a reinforcement of economic governance within the EU. Sócrates also had the opportunity to meet briefly with Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, with the same issues on the agenda.

3 March (Lisbon):

Secretary of State for European Affairs Pedro Lourtie met with Turkish Minister for European Affairs Egemen Bagis, with Turkey's accession process to the EU and bilateral relations high on the agenda. Bagis also had the opportunity to meet with Foreign Minister Luís Amado, and with Speaker of Parliament Jaime Gama.

8 March (Brussels):

Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the EU Ambassador Ana Paula Zacarias was appointed by High Representative Catherine Ashton as Head of the EU Delegation to Brazil.

9 March (Lisbon):

President Aníbal Cavaco Silva was inaugurated for his second term in office, after his electoral win on January 23rd.

9 March (Lisbon):

Foreign Minister Luís Amado met with Mohamed Tahir Siala, personal envoy of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. Amado announced that he had had a similar meeting with representatives of the rebel-backed Libyan National Council.

10 March (Brussels):

Foreign Minister Luís Amado attended the extraordinary EU Foreign Affairs Council with the situation in Libya high on the agenda, and was keen to prepare the upcoming extraordinary European Council.

10 March (Tunis):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho addressed the closing session of the Seminar on Democratic Transitions with a focus on Tunisia. Cravinho also took the opportunity to meet with senior Tunisian politicians, including with Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Radhouane Nouicer. The transition process in Tunisia, the situation in the Maghreb and the Middle East and EU-Tunisia relations were high on the agenda.

10-11 March (Brussels):

Defense Minister Augusto Santos Silva attended a NATO ministerial meeting, where the situation in Libya and the possibility of an allied military intervention were high on the agenda.

11 March (Brussels):

Prime Minister José Sócrates attended a special European Summit on developments in the Mediterranean, with particular focus on the growing unrest in Libya. Later on, he took part of the extraordinary European Council of leaders from the Eurozone, after his government announced a fresh package of austerity measures. Among the steps adopted, the bailout fund was increased, interest rates in Greece were lowered and it was announced that the bailout fund may buy bonds directly from governments in exceptional circumstances but only if those countries agree to further austerity measures.

**11-12 March (Budapest):**

Foreign Minister Luís Amado attended the Informal Meeting of EU Foreign Ministers (Gymnich), with the Southern Neighborhood, Libya and the follow-up of the extraordinary European Council meeting on this topic high on the agenda.

14-15 March (Washington DC):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho held meetings with National Security Council officials and with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson. The UN Security Council, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, drug trafficking in West Africa as well as issues related to Angola and Mozambique were high on the agenda.

16-17 March (New York):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho held several meetings with UN officials, including with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Peacekeeping Operations and former Head of UNMIT in Timor Leste Atul Khare, and with UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe. Afterwards, Gomes Cravinho also met with CPLP ambassadors and with Permanent Representatives of ECOWAS members to the UN.

17-18 March (Maputo):

Foreign Minister Luís Amado met with President Armando Guebuza and his local counterpart Oldemiro Balói in preparation for the 1st Portuguese-Mozambican bilateral summit to be held in Portugal during the first semester.

21 March (Brussels):

Foreign Minister Luís Amado attended the EU's Foreign Affairs and General Affairs Council meetings and met with European Council President Herman van Rompuy.

22-23 March (Belgrade):

Foreign Minister Luís Amado paid an official visit to Serbia where he met with several high authorities, including Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic, Deputy Prime Minister Bozidar Djelic, Speaker of Parliament Slavica Djukic-Dejanovic, Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic and Defense Minister Dragan Sutanovac. The reinforcement of bilateral ties, Serbia-EU relations and the situation in Kosovo were high on the agenda.

23 March (Lisbon):

The Portuguese parliamentary opposition consensually rejected the latest austerity

package put forward by the government to appease international markets and convince European authorities. Consequently, Prime Minister José Sócrates presented his resignation to President Aníbal Cavaco Silva.

23-24 March (Praia):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho met with officials from the recently appointed cabinet and inaugurated local projects supported by Portuguese cooperation funds.

24 March (Lisbon):

Foreign Minister Luís Amado met with his Georgian counterpart Grigol Vashadze seeking to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries.

24-25 March (Brussels):

Caretaker Prime Minister José Sócrates attended the European Council, where Portugal's latest political instability figured high on the agenda.

24-25 March (Bissau):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho met with Bissau-Guinean authorities seeking to evaluate bilateral relations and assess the situation on the ground, on the eve of a EU review of its relationship with Guinea-Bissau.

29 March (London):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho attended the international meeting over the situation in Libya, where the need for Muammar Gaddafi to resign was reaffirmed.

29-30 March (Coimbra):

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff attended former President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva's honoris causa ceremony. However, her trip was cut short due to the death of former Vice-President José Alencar.

30 March (Washington DC):

Defense Minister Augusto Santos Silva met with US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Portuguese efforts in Afghanistan, the situation in Libya and the reform of NATO's military commands were high on the agenda.

31 March (Lisbon):

President Aníbal Cavaco Silva formally accepted Prime Minister José Sócrates' resignation, dissolved the Parliament and called for snap legislative elections on June 5th.

São Tomé and Príncipe

3 March (São Tomé):

After meeting with Prime Minister Patrice Trovoada, US Ambassador to São Tomé and Príncipe Eric Benjaminson expressed his government's willingness to financially support the upcoming presidential elections in the archipelago as well as send observers to monitor results on the ground.

11 March (São Tomé):

Former Prime Minister Maria das Neves announced that she would run as a presidential candidate in the upcoming elections.

12 March (São Tomé):

After the signing of a new deal between Taiwanese ambassador John Chen and São Tomé and Príncipe's Finance Minister Américo Ramos, Taiwan is set to disburse US\$15 million on local projects in 2011 alone.

12-16 March (São Tomé):

São Tomé and Príncipe hosted the 32nd meeting of the UN Permanent Advisory Committee on security issued in Central Africa, with the attendance of high-level authorities from the ten state members of the Economic Community of Central African States (EECAS). A common sub-regional position under the São Tomé Declaration was adopted regarding upcoming negotiations over an international arms trade treaty.

28 March (São Tomé):

World Bank representative Monica Sawyer announced that the organization would grant US\$6.2 million in financial aid to São Tomé and Príncipe to boost the national budgets in 2011 and 2012.

Timor Leste

2-5 March (Brasilia):

Prime Minister José Alexandre 'Xanana' Gusmão met with President Dilma Rousseff. Bilateral relations and the reinforcement of cooperation between the two countries were high on the agenda.

4 March (Jakarta):

Foreign Minister Zacarias da Costa met with his Indonesian counterpart Marty Natalegawa and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Costa took this opportunity to formally request



Timor Leste's accession to the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), a move fully endorsed by the Indonesian officials.

7 March (London):

Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão attended a G7+ Forum meeting, which brought to the table several states and regions in precarious or fragile situations. Gusmão also took the opportunity to meet with British Secretary of State for International Development Andrew Mitchell.

7-10 March (Díli):

European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs, together with President José Ramos-Horta, announced a package of four strategic programs worth US\$54 million to help Timor Leste achieve stable democracy and sustainable development.

10 March (Díli):

According to statements provided to The Australian newspaper, Timor Leste's Chief Petroleum Negotiator, Francisco da Costa Monteiro, said the Timorese government would take into account "all consequences" of ensuring Sunrise gas was piped to Timor Leste, "even be it a breaking-up of the treaty".

11 March (Díli):

During an interview with Portuguese radio Rádio Renascença, President José Ramos-Horta suggested setting up an alliance with Angola and Brazil to acquire Portugal's sovereign debt bonds at less than the current market interest rate.

21-26 March (Jakarta):

Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, accompanied by Foreign Minister Zacarias da Costa, met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Several memorandums of understanding were signed.

Furthermore, Indonesia's support for Timor Leste's candidacy to ASEAN and the former's intention to purchase Indonesian-made fast patrolling boats, worth US\$20 million, were also high on the agenda.

27 March (Díli):

During an official ceremony celebrating the 11th anniversary of the national police force (PNTL), the UN Integrated Mission in Timor Leste (UNMIT) formally handed over policing duties to the PNTL, which will be now fully responsible for maintaining law and order nationwide, with the UN forces in a supporting role.

29 March (Bali):

Vice-Foreign Minister Alberto Carlos represented Timor Leste at the Bali Process ministerial forum, after expressing his doubts over the need to address the Australian-backed asylum-processing center in such a meeting.

29-31 March (Phnom Penh):

President José Ramos-Horta, accompanied by Minister of Commerce, Tourism and Industry Gil da Costa Alves, met with Prime Minister Hun Sen, King Norodom Sihamoni, President of the Senate Chea Sim and President of the National Assembly Heng Samrin. Cambodia's support to Timor Leste's ASEAN ambitions and possible cooperation in oil and natural gas extraction were high on the agenda.

31 March (Suva):

Foreign Minister Zacarias da Costa attended the summit of the Melanesian Spearhead Group as an observer, where Fijian leader Frank Bainimarama assumed the chairmanship.

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1st

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