

East Timor: Saturno Messages, 1978.

Introduction: The following text is a direct transcription of an undated four-page typescript document found in the archives of the late Denis Freney (National Library of Australia, MS 9535).

The archival document – probably created in late December 1978 - is self-identified as an English translation of decoded radio messages transmitted by Alarico Fernandes (in Timor-Leste) to the Fretilin external delegation between late September and late November 1978.

Apart from re-ordering the messages by date, this typescript is a reliable version of the archival document text. Paragraph spacing has been changed to increase readability. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected. Any textual ambiguities or grammatical errors are retained. Clarifying remarks by CHART are italicised in *[square brackets]*.

John Waddingham
Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor (CHART) Inc.
28 March 2024

Translation of Saturno Messages (decoded)

01/78 *[28 September 1978]*

- 1) From Alarico Fernandes and Afonso Redentor and Antonio Pinheiro, all three members of Fretilin CC, to Jose Ramos Horta, very urgent and secret.
- 2) Since beginning invasion only now we reach correlation of forces in the Centre North Sector in order to oppose the fanatical and megalomaniacal communists infiltrated in the Fretilin CC. Nicolau Lobato ambitious and megalomaniac. All of them reject you in their way.
- 3) We ask your secret entry extremely urgent in Australia in order to contact us directly by radio to fix details Operation Skylight which aims at bringing benefits to all.
- 4) We control armed companies and much population which can reach more than 20,000.
- 5) Above all we need moral, political and physical support from Australian and Indonesian Governments in joint actions.
- 6) Indonesian forces must stop all operations in the polygon Remexio Aileu Turiscai by road Turiscai village till Laklubur village in direct line Laklubur Manatuto village till Remexio village in direct line in order that we can create favourable conditions for Operation Skylight.
- 7) You must contact us directly from Australia before debate on East Timor in UN.
- 8) We choose frequency 5890 to contact Indonesians in Dili in order to guarantee ceasefire both parts (sides) and take other pertinent measures in mentioned zone.
- 9) Our position will be clear honest and realist. Don't go to Maputo and stop Mari to go there temporarily.
- 10) Speed and secrecy. Embraces of your brother AJF. 28/9/78

02/78 [01 October 1978]

1) I inform you that concerning Operation Skylight that we have on our side met comrades of Fretilin CC as Joao Bosco Soares and Sebastio Montalvao physically present. We also have support from members of Fretilin CC in other sectors.

2) For materialisation of Operation Skylight already in course it is necessary and urgent ceasefire in polygon already mentioned.

3) As already mentioned we insist in contact with Indonesian Command in Dili through frequency 5890 to coordinate each side ceasefire and other pertinent measures.

4) We insist your presence extremely urgent in Australia to contact us directly.

5) Operation Skylight aims at defending solely genuine interests of Maubere people who are being deviated by imposition of a fanatical ideology colliding with their just interests, by fanatical communists infiltrated into the Fretilin CC by the megalomaniacal and ambitious Nicolau Lobato

Speed and secrecy even in contact.

Our fraternal embraces AJF AR AP SM JBS. 1/10/78.

04/78 [12 October 1978]

1) We received your urgent messages dated 4/10/78 on 9/10/78 to which we reply

2) Carvarinho, Vicente Reis, Helio Pina, Carlos Cesar, Hamis Basserwan, Maria do ceu Carvarinho, Dulce Cruz and their battlehorses Juvenal Inacio, Guilhermine do Santos, Carvarinho's brother, are the fanatic and megalomaniac communists infiltrated into the Fretilin Central Committee, strongly supported by ambitious and megalomaniac Nicolau Lobato.

Despite Portuguese small radios this small group doesn't have receivers and transmitters of long range. Transmitters of long range are under our effective control.

3) I inform you that at this moment we already are in a situation of rupture with ambitious Nicolau Lobato and his small red group. Between this small group and Nicolau Lobato there are antagonistic contradictions for reasons of ambition of power.

4) Operation Skylight aims to neutralise not only the communism in the DRET as well as it is possible infiltration in defence of the genuine interests of the beloved and martyred people of East Timor for which we count:

a) on the support of all ranks and majority members of Fretilin CC physically absent in other sectors, unhappy with the already small group.

b) with the support at all levels to be given by all countries in geographic area in which is the DRET - very particularly from the peoples and governments of Australia and Indonesia.

5) Pertinent measures to be taken in already mentioned polygon:

a) ceasefire with the retreat of Indonesian forces to the periphery of the mentioned polygon with articulation between us, Indonesian military command in ET and brother in struggle JRH in Australia.

b) for the guarantee of the ceasefire in the mentioned polygon we suggest presence of neutral forces including Australia which meanwhile can be decided by you.

c) this will enable us to establish a platform to hold talks with representatives of the United Nations, Indonesian and Australian Governments with your physical presence to reach by this means a peaceful solution.

6) The mentioned polygon will serve as a base to the talks establishment of bilateral agreements aiming at reconstruction.

7) In this polygon will function a Council of National Salvation as a transition to the future government composition.

In this Council of National Salvation you and the members of the Fretilin CC chosen by you, by us five as follows, and by all members of the Fretilin CC in other sectors who will be integrated in our movement for which we count on the majority.

8) More details and suggestions will be sent and discussed with you from Australia and we hope that this will be very soon.

Embraces and greetings from your friends and fellows in struggle We will win.

Signed: AJF, Afonso Redentor, Antonio Pinheiro, Sebastino Montalvao, and J Bosco Soares
12/10/78

NB: Translation provided by Fretilin NOT FOR CIRCULATION OR PUBLICATION

05/78 [16 October 1978]

1) Reserved from A Fernandes for JRH. I inform you that our message 04/78 is one form of peaceful solution for ET case. Your opinion is important and urgent.

2) I have reserved a report for you. Very important to elaborate another code from Australia with you to transmit it.

3) Very necessary that Indonesian Government accepts our request for a ceasefire mentioned zone and Australian Government supports us also in order that we can work confident of overthrowing communists and their protector

4) Strategy Skylight has supreme objectives at all levels. We will talk

Embraces from your friend and fellow in struggle AJF 16/10/78

Message (I think of 1/11/78) - - - this is a rough translation by me. [DF?]

- - First part I could not decode but seems to be habitual opening listing usual Saturno five signatures. [DF?]

.. inform you that the Skylight strategy has difficulty in contacting other sectors because of the tight cordon around our sector which prevents us making contacts

In the case the Indonesians do not accept Operation Skylight we will continue to fight strongly. But it is very urgent you seek to persuade the Indonesians to support us

We are listening every day to the chosen frequency to make contact with the Indonesians

Death to the communists infiltrated among our people....

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Message of 22/11/78

a) Fretilin as an historical product was born as the ASDT founded in 20/5/74 as the sole and exclusive representative of the interests of the people of ET characterised by the feeling of “modus vivendi” through a policy which did not collide with other nations in the geographic area

b) With the support of Francisco X do Amaral and Nicolau Lobato, President and VP of the Fretilin CC respectively, infiltrated elements gained control of the Dept. of Political and Ideological Orientation.

Soon after the communists consolidated their position with the support of Nicolau Lobato. Francisco X do Amaral was being discredited among the people and was anti-communist, a fact which led him to launch an adventure which led to his imprisonment and put in cause the physical integrity of the Fretilin CC members who we[re?] non-communists.

c) From then, the supreme interests of the noble and martyred ET people were vilely betrayed by the communists vigilantly protected by N Lobato now named as President

d) Aiming to cultivate each time political and ideological power of the communists who obey N Lobato, he subtly and traitorously reduced in October 1977 the CC by 12 members, cutting off the non-communist CC members.

e) Aiming to strengthen their political and ideological power, the communists pushed for the creation of a marxist-leninist party, forcing the CC members in an assembly to pronounce favourably. Members clearly defined their positions which provoked remorse among the communists who were unable to realise their project.

f) Faithfully interpreting the wish of the majority of the ET people and to safeguard their feelings of “modus vivendi” in the name of all CC non-communist members we communicate:

1) Are expelled from the CC and DRET government the following and all those who support them:

a) Nicolau dos Reis Lobato

b) Antonio Duarte Carvarino Mau Lear

- c) Vicente Reis Sahe
- d) Hamis Basserwan – Ata
- e) Elio Pina Mau Cruma
- f) Carlos Cesar Lau Loaka
- g) Juvenal Inacio Mai Requi
- h) Guilhermina dos santos Ma Lere
- i) Abel de Fatima Ximines Lari Quili
- j) Maria do Ceu Carvarino Bi-Lear
- k) Dulce Cruz – Ye Ye
- l) Antonio Gomes da Costa – Lau Luan
- m) Antonio Nascimento
- n) Antonio Carvalho Junior Tero Safai

2) In relation to members of Fretilin CC in the external delegation the following measures are taken:

a) the following are suspended from their functions as members of the Fretilin CC and DRET Government: Abilio Araujo, Guilhermina Araujo, Jose Luis Guterres

b) are expelled from all functions: Rogerio Lobato is expelled from the Fretilin CC and the DRET Government for the crime of high treason to the just cause of the ET people.

c) expelled from the CC are the communists and their supporters as traitors to the just cause of the ET people. The Fretilin CC is composed solely and exclusively of its non-communist members...

(Only the five signatures are named as having functions - - AJF “Secretary General”, Afonso Redentor as assistant secretary-general, and so on. [DF])

LESS THAN A FORTNIGHT LATER THIS RUMP SURRENDERED TO THE INDONESIANS.

These are the main messages sent in the Saturno period as well as some plain text messages to different addresses, which I will send when photocopier is working again.

THESE ARE NOT, AT THE SPECIFIC REQUEST OF ALL THE EXTERNAL DELEGATION OF FRETILIN, FOR PUBLICATION. I AM SENDING THEM TO YOU AS REQUESTED ON THIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WILL NOT BE CIRCULATED. THESE MESSAGES ARE FOR YOUR EYES ONLY.

There is no interest for the struggle of the ET people to have these lies from Fernandes circulated. That is very strongly the opinion of the Fretilin CC members outside ET.

Yours
DF

[End of text]

Created for a CHART / Timor Archives website article at:
<https://timorarchives.wordpress.com/2024/03/27/skylight-saturno-messages/>