

Submission No 50

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

RE: Inquiry into the Timor Sea Treaty (May 2002) and the Exchange of Notes between East Timor and Australia (Timor Sea) (May 2002).

Dear Secretary,

Thank you for giving the Australian public the opportunity to comment on such important agreements.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which forms the basis for International Law would adjudicate that the boundary between Australia and East Timor is at the median distance between these two countries, thereby I find the attitude of the Australian Government, namely its withdrawal from the International Court proceedings, to be arrogant towards a new neighbour whose only intention is to attempt to secure the economic well-being of its population.

I have been made aware of the Australian Government insistence on placing these agreements on the bilateral negotiations agenda. I also understand that through such a procedure items of importance to East Timor, such as those above, may not come up for discussion for a number of years, which if the Australian Government was to persevere with would only add insult to injury.

The present Australian Government policy, if implemented, will not only rob one of the poorest nation on earth of much of the revenues from the Greater Sunrise gas and oil field and future discoveries in the contested areas, it certainly will undo the good work that the Australian Government and its people have done for the reconstruction of East Timor. The amount of revenues involved dwarfs Australia's overseas Aid contributions.

In my submission, therefore, the Committee should insist that the Australian Government:

1. resolve the outstanding seabed boundary dispute AND the related resources sharing issues between Australia and East Timor.
2. agreements with the East Timor Government be in accordance with International Law. If any of the parties should find the negotiations excessively

obstructive, it will be able to seek international arbitration in order to achieve a result.

3. will do the above in a timely manner, so as not to deprive the people of East Timor from the resources from the Greater Sunrise and the gas and petroleum fields of the North East and the South West Joint Development Areas.

Yours sincerely,

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