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PAGE 01 JAKART 02365 01 OF 03 050855Z
ACTION IO-19

INFO	LOG-00	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	OASY-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	EAP-01	EB-01	EUR-01	HA-09	H-01	INR-00
	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	PA-01	PM-02	PRS-01	P-01	RPCS-01	SCT-03	SIL-00
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1725
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 02365

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PHUM, PREL, PGOV, UNHRC-1, PO, ID
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDONESIA: A
- FRESH LOOK

REF: (A) JAKARTA 1264
- (B) JAKARTA 1000
- (C) 92 JAKARTA 15135
- (D) JAKARTA 2172

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
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PAGE 02 JAKART 02365 01 OF 03 050855Z

2. SUMMARY: IN THIS FIRST OF TWO CABLES, I PROVIDE MY SUMMARY IMPRESSIONS OF THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR AT A TIME OF HESITANT CHANGE IN INDONESIAN POLICY. THE REPRESSIVE AND PERVASIVE INDONESIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IS THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S GOAL OF INTEGRATION. THE TIMORESE WANT, ABOVE ALL, TO BE LEFT ALONE. YET THEY ARE NOT READY, ECONOMICALLY OR POLITICALLY, FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE INDONESIAN LEADERSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO

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PURSUE INTEGRATION, BUT DISAGREEMENTS ON HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WILL CONTINUE TO LEAD TO SLOW AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY SHIFTS IN POLICY. A SECOND CABLE WILL DISCUSS U.S. POLICY OPTIONS. END SUMMARY.

CURRENT SITUATION: GRIM BUT CALM

3. DURING MY INITIAL VISIT TO EAST TIMOR FEBRUARY 21-23, I MET WITH GOVERNOR ABILIO SOARES AND HIS STAFF AND TRAVELED FAIRLY EXTENSIVELY IN THE PROVINCE WITH SALESIAN PRIESTS WHO KNOW THE SITUATION WELL. I FOUND THE MOOD GRIM AND REPRESSIVE, BUT OUTWARDLY CALM. NEARLY EVERYONE AGREES THAT THE INDONESIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IS EXCESSIVE AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, AND THAT THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT OBSTACLE TO WINNING ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOI'S GOAL OF INTEGRATION.

4. GIVEN THE CRUELTY OF INDONESIAN ARMY PACIFICATION TACTICS OVER THE YEARS, IT IS LITTLE WONDER THAT THEIR OMNIPRESENCE IS A SOURCE OF SMOLDERING RESENTMENT. THE CURRENT MILITARY COMMANDER, BG SYAFEI, IS GIVEN CREDIT BY
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PAGE 03 JAKART 02365 01 OF 03 050855Z
SOME FOR HAVING QUIETLY PUNISHED OR REMOVED SOME INVOLVED IN TORTURE OR MISTREATMENT, BUT HE HAS ALSO PRESIDED OVER A BRUTAL EFFORT TO ROUND UP FRETILIN SUPPORTERS FOLLOWING THE ARREST OF XANANA GUSMAO. IN ANY EVENT, THE TIMORESE RESENT THE MILITARY'S PATERNALISM, CORRUPTION AND DOMINATION OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY AS WELL AS THEIR CRUELTY.

TIMORESE ASPIRATIONS

5. THE BEST DESCRIPTION OF TIMORESE ASPIRATIONS COMES FROM A SALESIAN PRIEST WHO KNOWS THE SITUATION WELL. "THEY WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE"--BUT, HE WENT ON, LEFT TO THEMSELVES THEY MIGHT WELL RETURN TO THE STATE OF CIVIL WAR AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION WHICH MARKED THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE PORTUGUESE PULLOUT IN 1974.

6. INDEED, ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS IS REMARKABLE DESPITE THE EFFORTS THE INDONESIANS HAVE PUT INTO BUILDING UP THE INFRASTRUCTURE, IMPROVING EDUCATION AND INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE MISSIONARIES AND NGO'S WE TALKED TO COMMENTED ON THE DIFFICULTY OF

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INTRODUCING THE PLOW TO SUBSTITUTE FOR DRIVING HERDS OF BUFFALO AROUND TO PREPARE FIELDS TO BE PLANTED. EFFORTS TO GET DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN INVESTORS TO BUILD FACTORIES IN TIMOR HAVE FAILED, AND THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT THE PROVINCE IS A DRAIN ON THE INDONESIAN TREASURY. THE MAJOR FACTORS WHICH PREVENT GROWTH ARE THE DEPRIVATION AND ISOLATION OF THE PAST 17 YEARS--ON TOP OF THE EXTREMELY LOW LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT LEFT BY PORTUGAL.

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PAGE 04 JAKART 02365 01 OF 03 050855Z
7. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JAKARTA, IT APPEARS THAT VATICAN POLICY IS TO SKIRT THE ISSUE OF THE STATUS OF TIMOR AND CONCENTRATE ON THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL WELFARE OF THE POPULATION. BISHOP BELO DOES NOT ALWAYS CONFORM TO THIS VIEW, AND THE PAPAL NUNCIO HERE (PROTECT) AND OTHER PRIESTS IN EAST TIMOR HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF BELO FOR HIS POLITICAL STANDS AND FOR THE RETROGRADE VIEWS OF THE TIMORESE PRIESTHOOD ON SOCIAL AND THEOLOGICAL ISSUES. BELO HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY AT ODDS WITH SYAFEI, AND DOES NOT ENJOY THE SAME CLOSE RELATIONS WITH GOVERNOR SOARES THAT HE HAD WITH FORMER GOVERNOR CARRASCALAO. HE CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT THE TIMORESE SHOULD BE GIVEN A VOICE IN THE RESOLUTION OF THEIR STATUS, I.E. A REFERENDUM, AND HE SAID HE IS CONSIDERING WRITING ANOTHER LETTER TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS

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PAGE 01 JAKART 02365 02 OF 03 050856Z
ACTION IO-19

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E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
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SITUATION. DESPITE HIS PROBLEMS WITH THE NUNCIO AND MILITARY, BELO REMAINS FOR MANY TIMORESE AN INFLUENTIAL AND ARTICULATE SPOKESMAN FOR THE TIMORESE CAUSE. HE BELIEVES TROOPS MUST BE WITHDRAWN FROM EAST TIMOR, HOPES THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND INDONESIA WILL PRODUCE A POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND STATES PUBLICLY THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR INTEGRATION TO WORK IS FOR INDONESIA TO START
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PAGE 02 JAKART 02365 02 OF 03 050856Z
TREATING THE TIMORESE MORE LIKE INDONESIANS.

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SAY ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE ROLE, THEN "R NOW. FOREIGN MISSIONARIES WERE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE IRRESPONSIBILITY OF THE PORTUGUESE IN FUELING UNREALISTIC HOPES AMONG THOSE OPPOSED TO INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA.

ZIG-ZAG INDONESIAN POLICIES

9. WE ARE TOLD THAT THERE CONTINUE TO BE DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE MILITARY AS TO HOW TO HANDLE THE TIMOR ISSUE. MOST SAY THAT SYAFEI WILL SOON BE PROMOTED AND MOVED TO DENPASAR, WHERE HE WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR EAST TIMOR AS COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY REGIONAL COMMAND (KODAM IX) HEADQUARTERED THERE. SYAFEI WILL BE REPLACED

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BY A COLONEL SOENTORI, CURRENTLY THE INTELLIGENCE ASSISTANT ON THE DENPASAR KODAM COMMANDER'S STAFF. SOENTORI WAS DESCRIBED TO US AS "NICE BUT RATHER STUPID." HE HAS NO PREVIOUS EAST TIMOR EXPERIENCE. GOVERNOR ABILIO AND OTHERS ASSURED US THAT SYAFEI'S LONG-STANDING RECOMMENDATION TO REDUCE SIGNIFICANTLY THE TROOP STRENGTH ON TIMOR AND REVERT TO THE TERRITORIAL COMMAND STRUCTURE WOULD SOON BE IMPLEMENTED.

10. OTHERS IN THE MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND APPARENTLY DISAGREE WITH SYAFEI AND HIS APPROACH AND CONTINUE TO OPPOSE SIGNIFICANT TROOP CUTS AND SYAFEI'S PROMOTION. SOME OF THIS IS EVIDENTLY CONDITIONED BY THE FINANCIAL AND CAREER BENEFITS WHICH THE MILITARY GETS FROM BEING IN
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PAGE 03 JAKART 02365 02 OF 03 050856Z
TIMOR. OTHERS REFLECT THE CONTINUING FEUD BETWEEN "LINE" OFFICERS LIKE SYAFEI, AND THE ARMED FORCES STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (BAIS), AND BAIS'S CONVICTION THAT FRETILIN WOULD QUICKLY REEMERGE IF THE MILITARY CONTINGENT IS REDUCED. ON BALANCE, IT APPEARS THAT THE MILITARY PRESENCE WILL BE REDUCED, BUT THAT IF IT APPEARS THAT THIS HAS EMBOLDENED THE SEPARATISTS THE TREND WILL BE REVERSED. THE SEPARATISTS THE TREND WILL BE REVERSED.

ACCESS

11. AS SUGGESTED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TRIAL OF FRETILIN LEADER XANANA GUSMAO, THE CURRENT INDONESIAN TACK SEEMS TO BE IN THE DIRECTION OF MORE ACCESS (REFTEL D). GOVERNOR ABILIO SAID HE WELCOMED THE IDEA OF A VISIT BY UNSYG REPRESENTATIVE WAKO, MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, ETC. WHILE THIS TREND, TOO, MAY BE REVERSED, WE DO BELIEVE THE DOOR IS OPEN FOR INCREASED ACCESS AS LONG AS THERE IS NO IMPLIED DEROGATION OF INDONESIAN SOVEREIGNTY. THE ICRC CONFIRMS THAT THEIR DEGREE OF ACCESS IS CURRENTLY MUCH IMPROVED, ALTHOUGH THEY SAID MANY WERE STILL AFRAID TO COME TO THEM WITH COMPLAINTS.

AUTONOMY

12. MOST THAT WE TALKED TO SHIED AWAY FROM SELF-DETERMINATION AS A GOAL FOR THE TIMORESE ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE CONCEPT WAS NOT VIABLE, AND THAT RAISING THE

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PROSPECT WOULD LEAD TO ANOTHER CYCLE OF UNREST AND
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PAGE 04 JAKART 02365 02 OF 03 050856Z
REPRESSION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY
WAS REFERRED TO APPROVINGLY FROM ALL FROM GOVERNOR ABILIO
TO BISHOP BELO. IT IS HARD TO DEFINE THE SPECIFIC
FEATURES OF AUTONOMY, WHICH MIGHT APPLY TO TIMOR, HOWEVER.

-- THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SEEMS ADEQUATELY
SAFEGUARDED, AND IN FACT THE NUMBER OF CATHOLICS HAS
TRIPLED SINCE THE INDONESIAN INVASION.

-- THE GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE MAKING AN EFFORT TO
"TIMORIZE" THE ADMINISTRATION, ALTHOUGH THE ECONOMY
REMAINS UNDER JAVANESE/CHINESE/MILITARY CONTROL.

-- FINANCIAL AUTONOMY IS NOT AN ISSUE, SINCE THE PROVINCE'

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PAGE 01 JAKART 02365 03 OF 03 050856Z
ACTION IO-19

INFO	LOG-00	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	OASY-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	EAP-01	EB-01	EUR-01	HA-09	H-01	INR-00
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REQUIRES AND RECEIVES CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FORM
JAVA.

-- CULTURAL AUTONOMY, INCLUDING THE PRESERVATION OF
ELEMENTS OF PORTUGUESE CULTURE, WOULD NOT SEEM TO BE A
PROBLEM; GOVERNOR ABILIO EVEN SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO SEE
A PORTUGUESE CULTURAL CENTER IN DILI (ALTHOUGH THE
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PAGE 02 JAKART 02365 03 OF 03 050856Z
MILITARY MIGHT FEEL DIFFERENTLY).

-- THE OFFER OF EDUCATION IN PORTUGUESE IN ADDITION TO
INDONESIAN MIGHT APPEAL TO SOME, BUT FOREIGN MISSIONARIES
ESTIMATE POTENTIAL INTEREST AS LOW.

13. COMMENT: AT PRESENT, THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR
SHOWS SOME PROMISE OF IMPROVEMENT ON NARROW HUMAN RIGHTS
GROUNDS FROM THE DARK PERIOD OF NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, THOUGH
THE SITUATION COULD BE REVERSED SUDDENLY. HOWEVER,
INTEGRATION WILL NEVER BE PALATABLE AS LONG AS IT IS
DEMANDED AT GUNPOINT. A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF THE
MILITARY CONTINGENT, COUPLED WITH MORE SCRUPULOUS BEHAVIOR
BY THE MILITARY AND INCREASED INDONESIAN INVESTMENT IN THE
PROVINCE COULD, OVER TIME, LEAD TO REAL INTEGRATION
ESPECIALLY IF THE GOI FINDS THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE INCREASE
IN SEPARATIST ACTIVITY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF LOOSENING UP.
EVEN IF THE INDONESIANS WERE PREPARED TO OFFER SELF-
DETERMINATION (AND THEY AREN'T), EAST TIMOR COULD NOT
SURVIVE AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. AUTONOMY SOUNDS GOOD, BUT
IS HARD TO DEFINE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY IN THIS VERY
CENTRALIZED COUNTRY.

BARRY

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