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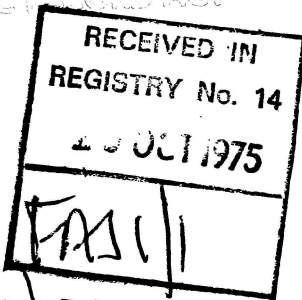
This is an extremely useful summary.

BRITISH EMBASSY

JAKARTA

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J L Jones Esq
South East Asian Dept
FCO



13 October 1975

*R/ Please copy to 19/10
PUSD, Assessment Staff
RD, IRD
A12 MOD
SED.*

Dear Lynton,

*then to Mr Swings for
Jones to*

PORTUGUESE TIMOR

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Our telegram No. 375 of 4 October reported the latest information on troop movements which had come to us on the Defence Attaché's net. The 'Hawks' do not appear to have had their way and these movements have not proved to be the first steps towards overt intervention. The Australian Embassy now see them as part of the slow reinforcement of units in Indonesian Timor which has been going on for some time.

2. According to the Australian Embassy the Indonesians have got themselves into a bit of a mess with their build-up. In addition to the Special Forces trained specifically for the operation in Timor, they now have in Indonesian Timor elements from a whole range of other special units: from RPKAD (Army Para Commando Regiment), KKO (Marines), KOPASSAGAT (quick action Air Force unit), Parachute and Airlanding Infantry units and Police Mobile Brigade Forces. These have apparently all been despatched in dribs and drabs with little coordination and with each unit relying on its own channels for supply and communication. A rather serious command problem is said to have arisen. The Australians gather that a Brigadier General from the RPKAD is about to be given overall command.

3. It would seem that there is some attempt to step up the clandestine operation. This fits in with what I have been told by officials in the DFA that the President again vetoed overt intervention at a meeting on 25 September. Akosah, in the Asian and Pacific Directorate at the DFA, described the situation in Jakarta during that week as "very tense"; it appears that the Hawks, led by General Panggabean who was then also Acting Foreign Minister, made a strong effort to convince the President that Portugal's continuing failure and inability to reassert its control left Indonesia with no alternative but to take action itself. Sudio Gandarum, the Head of the European Directorate at the DFA, told me that Indonesia's aim was simply to restore law and order in the colony, whereupon they would withdraw their troops and hand over control to the Portuguese. Akosah says he was asked by the Acting Foreign Minister to prepare a paper justifying Indonesian intervention; if the invasion had taken place "say on 1 October" the paper would have been telegraphed to posts and published the following day.

4. The reasons for the President's attitude are again

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described as proceeding from a wish not to do anything which will upset Indonesia's development in the shape of Repelita II on which the Government's whole policy of increasing "national resilience" as the best way of resisting communism and subversion is based. The President has apparently said that he has no wish to embark Indonesia on another confrontation, once was enough; to do so would divert resources from the Development Plan and at the same time undermine Indonesia's ability to obtain the financial and aid assistance from the international community which the Plan requires. The President has also said that he has given his word that Indonesia would not invade the colony, though of course with the caveat of Indonesia's own security not being endangered; the President, it appears, does not see Fretilin control as yet constituting any threat. Another factor is said to be concern about the reaction in the United States to an invasion, in particular the effect it would have on US willingness to sell Indonesia military equipment (see para 4 of Millington's letter 3/88 of 29 August to you; an Indonesian negotiating team is believed to be in the US at this moment). It is perhaps worth recording also a statement made to the press by General Panggabean on 27 September, shortly after the consultation with the President, in which he is quoted as reiterating the five major points of Indonesian policy on the Timor crisis as being:

- (i) Indonesia welcomes Portugal's decolonisation policy of its Timor colony;
- (ii) the decolonisation should be conducted in an orderly and just manner;
- (iii) Indonesia has no territorial ambitions;
- (iv) the Indonesian Government favours the wish of groups of Timorese for an integration with Indonesia;
- (v) the process of decolonisation should never threaten (Indonesia's) national stability.

5. I am told that the President's decision of 25 September was the last occasion on which the Timor issue was submitted to him. Since then Ministers and officials have been trying to work out what to do. Akosah and Gandarum both admitted quite freely that they are at a loss to know how to proceed. The clandestine operation - even if it provides some propaganda victories (and the press continue to milk every reported incident of Fretilin atrocities on the border) and even if it helps to give substance to the view which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain that Fretilin have not yet won full control of the colony (they are now reported as having set-up a transitional administration) - seems little more than a policy of faute de mieux; by its nature

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it has to be limited; until the President lifts his veto on overt action, no effective military use can be made of any Fretilin provocation on the border, however well staged. DFA officials have meanwhile been casting around for some expedient to open up the diplomatic front; they concede that this must involve Portugal yet Indonesian Ministers make any approaches more difficult by their continuing public criticisms of Portugal for the situation in the colony.

6. The DFA have apparently recently considered and rejected the idea of getting friendly powers in the region to appeal to Portugal to take some effective action regarding Portuguese Timor. Gandarum admitted that the Indonesians realised that there was virtually no chance of the Portuguese asking them to intervene in the territory on Portugal's behalf; he said Portugal was "very suspicious" of Indonesia. Nor do the Indonesians appear to expect much help from Australia; Akosah said that Indonesia would not agree to any talks on the colony being held in Canberra as 'the Australian public does not seem to understand the Indonesian position'.

7. The DFA's only hope appears to be that the Portuguese will honour the suggestion left by Dr Santos that there should be a conference of all the parties. Foreign Minister Malik has now on his return to Jakarta spoken in such terms. There are indeed indications that the Portuguese may so proceed. The Portuguese Foreign Minister, Melo Antunes, made some reference to a conference and to the need to consult Indonesia during his address to the United Nations. Lemos Pires, the Governor of Portuguese Timor, who has now returned to Ata'uro after visiting Lisbon, told a senior Australian official in Darwin as he passed through that Portugal would not hand over the colony to Fretilin but would seek talks with all three parties. Pires also said that there was no question of Portugal reintroducing troops into Portuguese Timor. He further added that Portugal would not talk to the UDT until they handed back the 23 Portuguese soldiers they still held prisoner. The Indonesians both in public and private are very scathing about the concern Portugal shows for the fate of these few men in the light of their apparent lack of interest and concern for the plight of the refugees; Gandarum told me Indonesia had refused to transmit an appeal from Portugal to the UDT for the release of the prisoners, on the grounds that Santos had declined Indonesian offers to take him to the border area to talk to UDT leaders and refugees and that it was Portugal's own responsibility to establish contact with its colonial citizens. This somewhat petty point scoring does not augur well for a meaningful dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia.

8. Meanwhile, it is the refugee problem which is causing the Indonesians the most immediate worry. There are now estimated to be 42,000 refugees in Indonesian Timor and Gandarum said they were costing Indonesia 5½ million rupiah a day. Akosah said that the President was concerned not only at the cost but about Indonesia's responsibility for ensuring their personal safety. The media have been focussing extensively on their plight and much publicity has

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been given to statements issued by a number of university student councils expressing concern about the refugees and support for the Government's policies. The sit-in at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra has now been matched by demonstrations and the handing in of petitions at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta; more are expected.

9. It is perhaps worth mentioning in conclusion that the Australian Embassy does not rule out some activity in the United Nations on the Timor issue. It appears that Fretilin have been sending messages to the UN; they apparently have good contacts with the Prelimo Government in Mozambique who have already made some mention of Portuguese Timor at the UN (para 4 of UKMIS telegram No. 1322 of 10 October to FCO). Fretilin have now sent a member of their central committee, Mario Alkatiri, off to visit Mozambique, Tanzania and Algeria en route to Lisbon. It remains Indonesia's wish to keep Portuguese Timor out of the UN.

10. When the Ambassador took the First Sea Lord to call on General Panggabean last Thursday, the subject of Portuguese Timor arose and the General indicated that he was of the firm view that integration with Indonesia was the only practicable solution to the colony's future; but he also stuck to President Suharto's line on self-determination and overt intervention. So too did General Surono when the Ambassador called on him this morning. General Surono in particular stressed the need for the Portuguese Government to act. In spite of the Ambassador's probing he did not say anything to suggest that the Indonesians had committed more forces to the border areas than they could there maintain for long.

11. The situation at the moment is thus extremely fluid, with the exception of the continuing firm veto of the President on overt military action. But the pressures are building up and Indonesia clearly cannot continue finding large sums of money for the refugees. We shall continue to keep you in touch with developments.

Yours ever

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