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TO PRIORITY F.C.O. TELNO. 470 OF 24 DECEMBER AND TO MOD (FOB)  
R.F.I. TO UKMIS NEW YORK, CANBERRA, KUALA LUMPUR, SINGAPORE,  
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TIMOR

1. THE OFFICIAL INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT REACTION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION ON TIMOR IS CONTAINED IN A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT BY INFORMATION MINISTER MASHURI DATED 22 DECEMBER AND PUBLISHED TODAY (TEXT IN MIFT).
  2. TODAY'S PRESS ALSO CARRIES THE TEXT OF AN APPEAL FROM THE 'PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT', SIGNED BY THE UDT AND APODETI PRESIDENTS, REQUESTING THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT 'TO RENDER ASSISTANCE, MILITARY, SOCIAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC, SO THAT A CONDITION OF PEACE AND ORDER IN THE TERRITORY OF EASTERN TIMOR CAN BE RESTORED, FREE FROM THE DISTURBANCES AND THREATS OF THE TERRORISTS' REMNANTS LEFT BY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT'
  3. THE INDONESIANS ARE UNREPENTANT. THE DEPUTY HEAD OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC DIRECTORATE IN THE DFA HAS SUMMARISED THE INDONESIAN ATTITUDE TO THE UN RESOLUTION FOR US WITH THE WORDS 'OFFICIALLY WE ARE NOT HAPPY; UNOFFICIALLY WE DO NOT CARE'. IT ALSO LOOKS AS IF THEY WILL RESPOND SLOWLY ON THE QUESTION OF UNITED NATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN TIMOR. THE OFFICIAL THOUGHT IT WOULD 'TAKE SOME TIME' BEFORE THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE MADE HIS VISIT TO THE TERRITORY. OBVIOUSLY THE INDONESIANS WANT TO PREPARE THE GROUND CAREFULLY AND THEY WILL USE EXCUSES ABOUT SECURITY AND SAFETY UNTIL THEY ARE READY. BUT THEY WILL WANT SOME UNITED NATIONS STAMP ON THE EVENTUAL ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. THERE IS SOME TALK HERE OF THE ACT TAKING PLACE AS EARLY AS MARCH; BUT INDONESIAN TIME TABLES FOR TIMOR HAVE TO BE TREATED WITH CAUTION. THE DFA OFFICIAL TOOK THE LINE THAT IT WAS BETTER TO GET IT OVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE 'WHILE CONDITIONS WERE STILL FAVOURABLE FOR INDONESIA'
- SECRET /4. MEANWHILE

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4. MEANWHILE THE INDONESIAN MEDIA ARE CARRYING REPORTS OF NORMALISATION IN THE TERRITORY. WE BELIEVE THESE TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY UNTRUE. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

SUGGESTS THAT THE INDONESIAN ASSAULT ON DILI PARTICULARLY THE AIRBORNE OPERATION WAS BADLY MISMANAGED. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF CASUALTIES RESULTING MAINLY FROM INDONESIANS FIRING ON THEIR OWN TROOPS. WE GATHER FURTHER THAT ONCE THE INDONESIAN FORCES HAD ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES IN DILI THEY WENT ON A RAMPAGE OF LOOTING AND KILLING IT SEEMS THAT THE DELAY IN THE ASSULT OF BACAU WAS DUE TO BAD PLANNING AND LOGISTICAL BACK-UP. THE INDONESIAN FORCES STILL REMAIN IN THE URBAN AREAS AND HAVE MADE LITTLE EFFORT TO MOVE AGAINST FRETILIN ACTIVITY IN THE RURAL AREAS. HEAVY RAIN IS HAMPERING MOVEMENTS. THE AUSTRALIAN D.A. ESTIMATES THAT BETWEEN 12 TO 15000 INDONESIAN TROOPS ARE NOW IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

5. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW LONG IT TAKES THE INDONESIANS TO SORT OUT THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND. MEANWHILE IF ASKED TO COMMENT ON ANY STORIES OF ATROCITIES I SUGGEST WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION; THAT THE SITUATION IN TIMOR IS TO BE INVESTIGATED BY THE UN REPRESENTATIVE; AND THAT WE HOPE ALL PARTIES WILL FACILITATE HIS EARLY APPOINTMENT.

6. THE INCOMPETENCE OF THE MILITARY OPERATIONS HAS APPARENTLY SHAKEN THE INDONESIAN ARMY BADLY. AT THE MOMENT THEY ARE TRYING TO SORT OUT THE FACTS, BUT THE SEARCH FOR SCAPEGOATS WILL PRESUMABLY BEGIN SHORTLY. IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT THE OUTCOME

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