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TO PRIORITY F.C.O. TELNO. 178 OF 4 JUNE 76

R.F.I. TO UKMIS NEW YORK, UKREP BRUSSELS, LISBON, CANBERRA, WASHINGTON  
TOKYO, WELLINGTON, SINGAPORE, KUALA LUMPUR, BANGKOK, MANILA.

273 MY TELNO 174 : TIMOR

1. THE INDONESIANS HAVE ONCE AGAIN PROVED INEPT STAGE MANAGERS. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE MAY BE THE LOSS OF AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE UN TO COME TO TERMS WITH WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN TIMOR. THE 'FACT FINDING MISSION' MAY HOWEVER PROVIDE A LAST CHANCE FOR THIS AND COULD BOTH BE GENUINELY MORE EFFECTIVE AND EASIER FOR US AND THE UN TO TAKE PART IN THAN THE STAGED POPULAR ASSEMBLY IN DILI. THIS IS BECAUSE THE INDONESIANS APPARENTLY ENVISAGE FOR THE NEXT ROUND SOME ATTEMPT TO LOOK AT THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND, AND BECAUSE THE INVITATION WILL NOT COME FROM THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND SHOULD THEREFORE CAUSE FEWER PROBLEMS OF RECOGNITION.

2. IT THE INDONESIANS WERE SENSIBLE THEY WOULD NOW APPROACH THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE OF TWENTY FOUR WELL IN ADVANCE (TO AVOID THE REACTION IN UKMIS NEW YORK TELEGRAM NO. 844 - NOT TO ALL) AND GET DOWN TO SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF UN PARTICIPATION IN THE FACT FINDING MISSION. IT WOULD THEN BE EASIER FOR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS HERE TO ATTEND, PARTICULARLY IF THE UN ASSOCIATED ITSELF WITH THE INVITATION, OR IF THE INVITATION WAS ROUTED TO GOVERNMENTS THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN NEW YORK.

3. BUT I FEAR WE CANNOT RELY ON THE INDONESIANS TO ACT SENSIBLY. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE NEXT STEPS WITH DFA OFFICIALS AND THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HAS SPOKEN TO GENERAL BENNY MOERDANI WHO IS THE ARMY'S CO-ORDINATOR ON TIMOR. THE DFA EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING

OF THE DESIRABILITY, FROM INDONESIA'S POINT OF VIEW, OF ASSOCIATING THE UN WITH THE FACT FINDING MISSION. BUT GEN MOERDANI MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT, WHILE THE UN WOULD AGAIN BE INVITED, NEITHER THE TIMING NOR THE SUBSTANCE OF THE FACT FINDING MISSION WOULD BE VARIED TO MEET THE SUSCEPTIBILITIES OF THE UN OR OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONS.

4. THE US AMBASSADOR HAS THEREFORE DRAWN THE CONCLUSION THAT, WHILE IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE DESIRABLE FOR THE UN TO PARTICIPATE, INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS WILL HAVE TO TAKE THEIR DECISION ON WHETHER TO ATTEND THE NEXT ROUND ON THE BASIS OF THEIR NATIONAL INTEREST AND THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA. HE BELIEVES THE US WILL BE IN FAVOUR OF ATTENDING, EVEN WITHOUT THE UN, PROVIDED THEY ARE NOT ALONE. HE SEES FURTHER REASON FOR CAUTION IN PINNING TOO MUCH ON THE UN IN THE RECENT ICRC ATTEMPTS TO RE-ESTABLISH THEIR PRESENCE IN TIMOR. THEIR REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN ALLOWED ONLY A TWO HOUR VISIT TO DILI AND THE INDONESIANS HAVE CONCEDED NOTHING ON ANY OF THEIR THREE AIMS - TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE PORTUGUESE PRISONERS, TO SUPERVISE THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF AID, AND TO GET PERMISSION FOR ANOTHER VISIT TO DETENTION CAMPS IN INDONESIA ITSELF. THE US EMBASSY POINT OUT THAT A FURTHER VISIT BY WINSPEARE WHICH WAS MADE UNDER SUCH RESTRICTIVE CONDITIONS THAT HE FELT BOUND TO REPORT UNFAVOURABLY TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL, MIGHT BE WORSE THAN NO VISIT AT ALL.

5. WHILE I ACCEPT THE REASONS FOR THE US AMBASSADOR'S CAUTION, THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCCESSFUL U.N. PARTICIPATION WOULD BE SUCH THAT I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD BE CONTENT TO BE MERELY PASSIVE OBSERVERS OF THE DEVELOPING SITUATION. FROM THIS END WE SHALL CONTINUE TO URGE THE INDONESIANS PRIVATELY TO BE FLEXIBLE. THE AMERICANS, AUSTRALIANS AND THE NEW ZEALANDERS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY ARE DOING THE SAME; BUT THE AMERICANS WILL NOT PRESS HARD FOR THE REASONS GIVEN ABOVE, AND THE AUSTRALIANS SAY THAT, IN THE STATE OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA FOLLOWING THE DILI FIASCO, THEY FEAR THAT TOO MUCH FURTHER ADVICE FROM THEM MIGHT BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

6. AS SEEN FROM HERE, THE BEST CHANCE OF ACHIEVING UN PARTICIPATION MAY LIE IN NEW YORK. YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT WOULD BE WORTH EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND FRIENDLY MISSION. IF THE UN ARE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE AND TO ACCEPT INDONESIAN INTRANSIGENCIES ON THE CONDITIONS OF ATTENDANCE, THE BEST WAY TO PERSUADE THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT TO SOFTEN THOSE INTRANSIGENCIES MIGHT BE THROUGH AMBASSADOR SANI, WHO SHOULD BE AWARE OF UN REALITIES.

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