



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Timor link, no. 31, January 1995

This is the Published version of the following publication

UNSPECIFIED (1995) Timor link, no. 31, January 1995. Timor link (31). pp. 1-8.

The publisher's official version can be found at

Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/25965/>

APEC: the turning point?

East Timorese students and workers seized the opportunity to make East Timor a household word in November, writes ARNOLD KOHEN. As President Clinton and the leaders of 17 other nations arrived in Jakarta for the APEC regional summit, protesters occupied the US embassy and staged demonstrations in Dili.

The sheer courage of the 29 young East Timorese who scaled the fence of the US embassy in Jakarta on the eve of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in November riveted worldwide attention on the territory as never before. With simultaneous demonstrations in Dili, the world's major newspapers, radio and television brought to millions of viewers daily reminders of the struggle for freedom and dignity in the former Portuguese colony.

Ironically, the action of the students and workers at the US embassy received more international attention than the event they were commemorating – the third anniversary of the 12 November 1991 massacre of unarmed civilians at Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili. Indeed, for the better part of a week the scenes of the young people in the embassy were reminiscent of the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square. As *The Economist* put it: 'The demonstrations, both in Dili and Jakarta, served their purpose. International television coverage of the summit was juxtaposed with pictures from East Timor and the American embassy compound.'

Simple demands

The demands of the East Timorese in the embassy were clear and simple: the release of the leader of the resistance to the Indonesian occupation, Xanana Gusmão, serving a 20 year prison sentence since his capture by Indonesian forces two years ago. The protesters were also demanding a meeting with either President Clinton or Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in Jakarta for the APEC summit.

Although neither demand was granted, the implicit message – that the world pay attention to the East Timor tragedy – was heard by the international news media, which generally treated the demonstrators' grievances with respect.

In the English-speaking world alone, editorials from *The Times* and *The Guardian* in London to the *Toronto Globe* in Canada to the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times* in the United States, as well as the popular press in many places, saluted the bravery of the East Timorese in the Jakarta embassy and called for their protection as

well as that of East Timorese arrested in East Timor itself.

Rights issues raised

In his meeting with Indonesia's President Suharto after the APEC summit, Clinton raised the issue of human rights in East Timor. He said the people of East Timor should have 'more control over their own affairs' – a formulation that went beyond what any other US president has stated in public.

While Clinton was in Jakarta, a leading Republican voice sent a tough message to Indonesian leaders who may have believed the recent US congressional election was good news for them. US Representative Frank Wolf of Virginia said: 'Even though the controlling party has changed, Congress will continue to speak out strongly against human rights violations of the East Timorese.'

Australian and Canadian leaders also raised the human rights aspect of the Timor question.

Crackdown

With the departure of APEC conferees from Indonesia, there were worrying signs of an imminent crackdown in East Timor.

Peaceful demonstrators outside Dili cathedral were stoned by a group that appeared to BBC reporter Philip Short to be plainclothes Indonesian security agents acting as provocateurs. In the ensuing melee, a young East Timorese trying to help a German TV crew leave the scene was savagely beaten by security forces in full view of visiting journalists. Several Western journalists were expelled from East Timor in the days that followed.

Meanwhile, the East Timorese in the US embassy ended their action on 24 November

Summary

This issue of *Timor Link* reports on the growing pressures for progress over East Timor in the wake of the international interest generated by the protests at the time of the Asia-Pacific summit. Dr Peter Carey, of Oxford University, analyses political developments in Indonesia and David Scott looks at the prospects for a rethink of Australia's policy towards Indonesia. We also report on the multi-layered negotiations developing between various East Timorese groups and the Indonesians and on the implications of Britain's aid-for-arms 'entanglement'.

IN THIS ISSUE

APEC: The turning point	1
1995: Ambivalent anniversaries	2
Rethinking Australian policy on East Timor	3
Diplomatic maze	4

Resistance meets Alatas	4
Second 'reconciliation' talks	5
Sydney meeting	5
CAAT reports on arms and aid	5
Australian Labour Party calls for action	6
Timor Gap pact tested in court	6

British Commons mission under fire	6
Mandela visit	6
Guerrillas offer ceasefire	6
Amnesty International Report	6
Belo thanks US bishops	7
Cardinal Arinze visits Indonesia	8

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

and accepted an offer of residence in Portugal.

Now that international attention has shifted, Indonesian authorities are said to be preparing cases against at least 15 East Timorese for their alleged role in organizing demonstrations at the time of the APEC meeting. On 8 December, Bishop Carlos Belo called for 'peace and reconciliation in this Christmas season'. He made it clear that torture and other serious abuses of human rights are continuing.

The momentous events at the time of the APEC meeting may set in motion a process that could eventually bring about a diplomatic solution to the East Timor tragedy. For the moment, however, the international community must be vigilant. Strong pressure must be mobilized to ensure that the brave East Timorese who dared to insist on their right to self-determination and dignity are not the object of retribution. ■

Arnold Kohen is a freelance writer and journalist based in Washington DC.

1995

A year of ambivalent anniversaries

Indonesia's independence celebrations this year will be marred by a new climate of repression, writes Dr PETER CAREY, Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford. After a period of relative openness, politicking within the government has sparked another round of attacks on press freedom.

1995 is a year of special significance in Indonesia. It marks the fiftieth anniversary of the republic's independence from the Dutch. This will be a time for celebration and an opportunity to reflect on an increasingly uncertain future. President Suharto's old 'New Order' enters its fortieth year, and one of the longest-lived regimes in the developing world marks its nationalist apotheosis. *Lima-Puluh Tahun Merdeka!* ('50 years of independence') will be the cry girding the 13,000-island archipelago.

But in East Timor, other – less joyous – anniversaries will be marked. The August 1975 civil war, the 28 November Fretilin unilateral declaration of independence and the 7 December Indonesian invasion are all 20 years old. When, in 1913, the Dutch had the temerity to ask their colonial subjects in Indonesia to contribute money for the celebration of the centenary of Dutch liberation from French occupation, it served only to deepen nationalist sentiment among the Javanese elite. The 1995 celebrations may prove equally ambivalent.

New repression

After four years of relative 'openness' (*keterbukaan*), 1994 was a year of repression. The Indonesian labour movement, the press, non-governmental organisations and the universities – especially individuals prepared to go public on sensitive issues – all have been the target of attack. Even as heads of state prepared for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, an Indonesian court was handing down a three-year jail sentence on Dr Muchtar Pakpahan, leader of the independent trade union Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia (SBSI), for his role in the Medan riots of 14 April.

Suharto was sending a message to his guests, particularly President Clinton, that Indonesia would deal with domestic dissent in its own way, regardless of Western pressures. The US Ambassador in Jakarta, Robert Barry, had already provided reassurances. 'APEC is a trade forum,' he said in August, 'not a forum for discussing human rights or the rights of workers.' (*Bernas*, 25 August 1994)

Outmanoeuvring the military

When, in August 1990, Suharto referred to the need for a new era of openness in the Indonesian press, he was more concerned to steal a march on critics within the Armed Forces (ABRI) than with any new commitment to democratic values. It was no secret that key political players within the military were at the time attempting to patronise the press in order to project themselves to a wider audience. This was part of ABRI's strategy to regain ground lost during the 1980s, when military influence in high government circles, increasingly dominated by Suharto's family and members of his civilian camarilla (Bob Hasan, Harmoko and BJ Habibie) had been on the wane. Suharto seemed prepared to leave the job of press management to his ministers – particularly information minister Harmoko – while encouraging his own family to buy into the media. By the early 1990s, all three commercial television stations and the major publishing group Media Indonesia were under their control. His eldest daughter, Siti Rukmana Hardiyanti, chaired the Association of Private Radio Stations. Harmoko, meanwhile, had secured proprietorial rights to perhaps as many as 20 newspapers and journals.

But such a strategy still left many openings for those sectors of the domestic press not imme-

diately under control of the first family. Editors were not slow to respond. The next four years witnessed a dramatic change in media coverage of hitherto taboo subjects such as government corruption, intra-elite rivalries and the role of the military in Indonesian politics – the so-called 'dual function' (*dwifungsi*) which dated back to the 1950s.

During this period, the press provided a platform for intellectuals, human rights and pro-democracy activists as well as the burgeoning community of non-governmental organisations which, for the first time, brought into the public eye issues such as labour rights, land disputes and environmental degradation.

Tempo, *Editor* and *Detik*, the three publications banned in June 1994, led the way in this process, constantly testing the limits of press freedom in what had been one of Asia's most tightly controlled media cultures. By early 1994, only the Philippines and Thailand in South East Asia could be compared to Indonesia for the boldness of its media coverage.

Government split revealed

The very boldness of the press proved its undoing. What had begun in August 1990 as a political ploy against the military, had developed into a situation where factions within ABRI had begun to use the media for their own political ends, and the media itself had developed the capacity to inform public debate on issues touching the very heart of the regime.

Disclosures in June of the rifts in the cabinet cast a spotlight on civilian-military tensions at the centre of the Suharto government. Research and technology minister BJ Habibie and finance minister Mar'ie Muhammad clashed over the US\$1 billion cost of refurbishing 39 warships of the former East German navy, and military chiefs fumed at Habibie's lack of consultation at the original purchase.

The rift emerged just seven months after the outgoing deputy chairman of the military faction in parliament, Major-General Sembiring Meliala, said the army would never tolerate a civilian president after Suharto (*Detik*, November 1993). It posed Suharto a challenge he could not ignore. Unable to distance himself from his ambitious protégé, the president struck out against the press. But, at best, this will afford Suharto only a brief respite. With the prospect of a disputed succession in March 1998, a deepening rift between the palace and the military, and the growing unpopularity of Harto-Harmoko-Hasan-Habibie nexus (known as the 'ha-ha-ha-ha' regime), the scene is set for a turbulent *fin-de-siècle* in Indonesia.

Such turbulence will, however, spell new opportunities for East Timor where a younger, post-1975 generation will come of age, and where 20 years of military occupation have forged a new identity for its long-suffering people. ■

• A new book exploring this identity and the prospects for East Timor in the dying years of the Suharto regime will be published in July 1995 by Cassell (London): Peter Carey and G Carter Bentley (eds), *East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation*.

Rethinking Australian policy on East Timor

Australian policy seems stuck in the mould of compliance with Indonesia aimed at achieving close Australian-Indonesian relations. This bankrupt strategy should be abandoned in favour of resolving the impasse on East Timor, writes DAVID SCOTT. Now is the time, he says, for Australia to press for fully representative talks.

As early as 1974, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam proposed to President Suharto 'integration with self-determination' as the preferred arrangement for East Timor, effectively precluding independence. This he did without consultation with the people of East Timor and at a time when their two largest political parties, UDT and Fretilin, were both committed to independence.

Acknowledging the failure of the policy of Whitlam and Richard Woolcott, ambassador to Indonesia from 1974-75, would clear the way for a reassessment and a new policy relevant to the circumstances of 1994, one that would break the present impasse and help Indonesia achieve a settlement of the East Timor 'affair'.

Fundamental flaws

The assumptions on which the 1974-75 policy were based – a policy Whitlam adopted without consulting his own government – have all proved tragically wrong.

The strategy assumed the East Timorese would soon see themselves as benefiting from integration with Indonesia. Today, 19 years and some 200,000 deaths later, a referendum on integration would return a 95 per cent 'no' vote from the East Timorese.

Australia's policy also assumed East Timorese resistance should be quickly overcome and with few casualties. 'Dili for breakfast, Baucau for lunch and Lospalos for dinner' was the reported boast of General Moerdani. Today, the armed resistance still requires large numbers of Indonesian troops and police to be in occupation.

Proponents of the policy also believed the international community would ignore the violation of East Timor's right to self-determination. For a time, and in the atmosphere of the Cold War, this was largely correct. But today there has never been greater international concern. East Timor is seen increasingly as a human rights aberration.

Failed objectives

The objective of Australia's access to Timor Sea oil is yet to be realised, although it is becoming a matter of urgency both for Australia and Indonesia. Both countries will be net importers of oil early in the next century, but Timor Sea oil developments are in limbo until the Inter-



EAST TIMOR: Time for change

Timor, area 7,400 square miles, is one of the easternmost islands of the Indonesian archipelago and lies 300 miles north of Australia, its nearest neighbour. The western part of the island, formerly a Dutch colony, belongs to Indonesia, whereas East Timor was for more than 400 years a Portuguese colony.

In 1974 Portugal decolonised East Timor, whose newly formed political parties began discussing options for the future – federation with Portugal, independence, or integration with Indonesia. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) initially favoured the first option but then joined a coalition with the nationalist liberation movement, Fretilin, to demand independence. A small third party, Apodeti, was used as a vehicle for Indonesian propaganda in favour of integration.

On 11 August 1975 the UDT staged a coup to pre-empt Indonesian threats to intervene if Fretilin came to power. In the ensuing civil war, 1,500 people lost their lives. By September 1975, however, Fretilin was in control of virtually all of Portuguese Timor, following the defection of Timorese colonial troops to the liberation movement's side.

Indonesia, like the United States, was worried by the proximity of an independent state with radical policies and continued to threaten East Timor, despite previous assurances that Jakarta would respect the right of the East Timorese to independence. In September 1975 Indonesia closed West Timor to journalists and on 7 December it launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor with the knowledge of the United States and the encouragement of Australia. East Timor was proclaimed the '27th province' of Indonesia.

The invasion and annexation of East Timor has been brutal: up to 200,000 people, a third of the population, have died as a result of Indonesian rule. But the majority of Timorese have not accepted subjugation: Indonesia has been unable to eliminate the desire of the East Timorese for self-determination

and an armed resistance movement still remains in the hills.

Although the invasion has been condemned by successive UN resolutions, the international community has done little or nothing to implement them, given the major economic and geopolitical interests of the United States, Japan and particularly Australia in the region. Indonesia's crucial strategic location and regional status – it has the world's fifth largest population, and large reserves of oil and other natural resources – have all encouraged the world to downplay East Timor's agony.

In recent years, however, several events have combined to break East Timor's isolation and bring its continued occupation to international attention. In 1989 the Pope visited the territory and in 1991 the planned visit of a parliamentary delegation from Portugal, still considered the administering authority of East Timor by the UN, created huge expectations of change. To great disappointment in East Timor, the delegation was forced in October 1991 to call off its visit.

On 12 November 1991 Indonesian troops shot and killed up to 300 East Timorese civilians during a funeral procession held at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the East Timorese capital, for a victim of repression. Witnessed by foreign journalists, the Santa Cruz massacre provided indisputable evidence of Indonesian atrocities.

The Santa Cruz massacre has forced governments around the world to criticise Indonesia's brutality, injecting new impetus into diplomatic efforts to bring about a solution to East Timor's suffering. Since 1983 the UN Secretary-General has been entrusted with the achievement of a settlement to the dispute; and with the post-Cold War era providing a new international climate for negotiations, Indonesia faces increased pressure to reach a solution with Portugal and the East Timorese under the auspices of the UN.

national Court of Justice rules on the Portuguese challenge to the legality of the Australian Indonesian Timor Gap Treaty (see page 6).

Whitlam supported integration of East Timor to improve Australian-Indonesian relations. Yet for most of the past 19 years, relations have been little better than uneasy. In recent years, there has been good co-operation on trade union matters. This activity provides a stronger basis for Australia to influence Indonesia on East Timor.

Indonesia appears still to exercise moral and political influence over Australia because of Australia's support for integration, its prior knowledge of the use of large scale military force and failure to take action to prevent it. The Australian government and opposition were a 'party principal' in 1975 to what *The Times* (London) described as 'East Timor's reduction to a state of vassalage which was violent, unethical, unfair and uncivilised'. (18 August 1993)

A recent example of Australian compliance is in the upgrading of military relations with Indonesia. Australia has offered to provide military training facilities that the US Congress voted down as an expression of its judgement on Indonesia's human rights record. On 6 August 1994, defence minister Robert Ray announced proposals for the joint Australian-Indonesian manufacture of military equipment. Justifying this, he spoke of Indonesia's improved human rights record.

Public disquiet

This approach on East Timor is supported by few Australians. I have never met anyone who has not expressed concern about East Timor, even if they believe there was little that Australia could have done in 1975. Concern is expressed through churches, human rights organisations, trade unions, overseas aid bodies, and other community organisations.

East Timor influences many Australians' perception of Indonesia. Some see the occupation as a sign of Indonesian expansionism. Richard Woolcott was rightly concerned by a survey in 1993 that found 57 per cent of voters and 28 per cent of legislators believed Indonesia would pose a security threat to Australia in the next 10 years (*The Australian*, 30 October 1993).

But Woolcott, now chairman of the Australia-Indonesia Institute, went on to accuse Australians concerned about East Timor of being 'noisy and anti-Indonesian'. On the contrary, those concerned about East Timor want close Australian-Indonesian relations. But, unlike Woolcott, they see Indonesia's behaviour in East Timor as a barrier to improved relations, and work to remove rather than deny this. Acquiescence does not win respect or real friendship. Resolution of the impasse on East Timor should be the central objective of Australia's Indonesia policy.

Australia still gives out conflicting messages on East Timor. Prime Minister Bob Hawke was a strong critic of the Santa Cruz Massacre and the Labour caucus passed a motion supporting self-determination. But subsequent comments from the foreign ministry on reports of the Indonesian commission of inquiry into the massacre went little further than diplomacy required.

The lack of a clear position by the government and opposition reflects their guilt at having had prior knowledge of Indonesia's proposed military assault, concealing it and taking no action to prevent it.

Meddling

In April 1992, when José Ramos Horta, speaking with the authority of the East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmão, released detailed proposals for negotiation to the European Parliament Human Rights Sub-Committee, Senator Gareth Evans rejected them seemingly even before the Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas did so.

The government claims Australia's close relations allow it to influence the Indonesian government in ways that would not be possible if Australia distanced itself and took a stronger position on human rights and East Timor. This view is credible only if there is a clear policy objective and a clear strategy. It is not enough that broad human rights issues, including East Timor, are raised in occasional, private discussions with the Indonesian foreign minister or if only passing references are made to the need for talks.

Senator Evans said recently: 'It is impossible for East Timor to regain its independence, because this would create a precedent that could lead to the disintegration of Indonesia.' (*The Age*, 12 July 1994). This was an unfortunate and unnecessary statement. It encourages the 'precedents' argument to be used against proposals for other kinds of relationship between Indonesia and East Timor. And why the need to talk about independence when Gusmão and Ramos Horta are proposing moves towards self-rule and autonomy to be followed by a referendum on independence, integration or another form of association with Indonesia after a period of many years?

Australia has been active on human rights issues. But, like other countries, it is selective in its interpretation of human rights policies. In some instances, the universality and indivisibility of human rights is argued – but not for East Timor.

Hopeful signs

Recently, there have been some changes. At the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in July, Evans appealed to Indonesia to reduce its military force in East Timor and enter dialogue with the East Timorese, including the resistance movement. He also criticised Indonesia for its attempt to stop non-government conferences in Manila and Bangkok. 'Such talks could help resolve the vexing issue which continues to cast a shadow over Indonesia's international standing,' he said.

The government has asked that an Australian consulate be opened in Dili. These Australian statements are hopeful signs. But a resolute policy is needed, starting with a commitment to the only process that can lead to a settlement – talks. ■

• This article is adapted from David Scott's *Ten days in East Timor and the Case for Talks*, published by

the East Timor Talks Campaign in Australia. The booklet argues that talks under UN auspices between Indonesia and the East Timorese people, including the resistance, should be the centrepiece of all international activity on East Timor. The book is available, price AUD\$2.00 from East Timor Talks Campaign, 124 Napier St, Fitzroy, 3065, Australia. Fax: 03 416 2746.

DIPLOMATIC NEWS

Diplomatic maze

The diplomacy around the search for a solution to the East Timor question took some unexpected twists in September and October. Dialogue is now being pursued at several levels between various East Timorese and members of the Indonesian government. Although there is yet to be concrete evidence that the Indonesian government is prepared for real consultation with broad sections of East Timorese opinion, recent activity gives some hope for the effectiveness of diplomatic pressure.

Against the backdrop of mounting external political pressure and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in mid November, the foreign ministry and elements within the military have been anxious to demonstrate progress on East Timor.

Following the latest round of bilateral talks between the Indonesian and Portuguese foreign ministers, the UN secretary general has encouraged the Indonesian government to stick to its undertaking to consult with East Timorese of all shades of opinion, pro and anti-integration. UN secretary general Boutros Boutros Ghali, in his report on East Timor to the UN General Assembly, spoke of his intention to facilitate such meetings, and 'all inclusive intra-Timorese dialogue'.

Resistance meets Alatas

Boutros Ghali engineered two meetings in October between opposing sides in the East Timor impasse. The second, on 6 October in New York, was of special significance: for the first time, a delegation from the East Timorese resistance – José Ramos Horta of the National Council for Maubere Resistance (CNRM), José Luís Guterres of Fretilin and João Carrascalao of UDT – met with Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas.

Talks had taken place a few days earlier between Durao Barroso, the Portuguese foreign minister, and Francisco Lopez da Cruz who acted as a spokesperson for those East Timorese in favour of integration with Indonesia.

The three resistance leaders called on Alatas to withdraw the Indonesian military under UN

supervision and to free Xanana Gusmão. According to Ramos Horta, during the two-hour meeting they managed 'to differ on every subject without ever raising their voices'. At the request of both parties, the UN secretary general was not present at the meeting. Ramos Horta has apparently refused to meet with Suharto unless he is accompanied by Xanana Gusmão.

It appears that Alatas had an earlier meeting with the sacked former Fretilin leader, Abilio Araujo (see below) who has been engaged in his own diplomatic efforts with the Indonesian government. Araujo was to meet with President Suharto and former Fretilin supporter Rogerio Lobato.

Second 'reconciliation' talks

A second round of 'reconciliation talks' between pro and (supposedly) anti-integration East Timorese took place in Chepstow, South Wales, from 25-28 September 1994. The talks have been denounced by the UDT, Fretilin and the CNRM as unrepresentative and divisive.

While pro- and anti-integrationist Timorese have attended the meetings in good faith, the fact that the talks are the brainchild of Araujo and Lopez da Cruz has not inspired confidence. Lopes da Cruz, former leader of UDT, and roving Indonesian ambassador for East Timorese affairs is identified wholly with the Suharto regime. The independence of Araujo, the former external leader of Fretilin has also lately been questioned by many East Timorese. At least two participants of the previous 'reconciliation talks' refused to take part in this round.

Da Cruz described the talks in the same terms as the first round: 'an informal meeting which does not aim to deal with the question of East Timor's political statute, but to contribute towards a better understanding among Timorese, in a spirit of reconciliation'.

The fact that the talks have taken place can be argued to honour the spirit of the latest meeting in Geneva. The UN sent Tamrat Samuel as a representative to the Chepstow meeting, saying the talks offered 'an opportunity to initiate the first in a series of consultations with East Timorese of differing political opinion, with a view to facilitating an all-inclusive intra-Timorese dialogue'.

The UN added: 'The Secretary General intends to pursue similar consultations with other East Timorese not participating in the Chepstow meeting, in the belief that dialogue among East Timorese of different views could make a significant contribution to the main talks between Indonesia and Portugal held under his auspices.'

Declaration

The Chepstow talks' concluding statement reads as an Indonesian government pronouncement, in which the East Timorese describe themselves as 'the leaders of the East Timorese society living

British government pressured on arms deals

WILL McMAHON, of Campaign Against the Arms Trade, says there is nothing temporary about the British aid for arms 'entanglement'.

In November, the High Court declared Britain's aid for the Pergau Dam illegal. Technically, the case was not about the arms trade but about the economic viability of the Pergau Dam project. The case did, however, give prominence to the 'temporary entanglement', as foreign secretary Douglas Hurd described it, of aid packages and arms deals between the UK and Malaysia.

From there, the trail led to the blossoming relationship between London and Jakarta. It is becoming apparent that the link between aid and UK arms sales is something more than temporary or a simple entanglement.

There is a clear correlation between the flow of UK aid and arms sales. For example, Tanzania, one of the poorest countries in the world, has received almost no aid increases since the Conservatives came to power in 1979. Aid to Indonesia has grown steadily in that period, alongside arms sales. And in the past four years alone, aid provision to Indonesia has tripled. It is not surprising that a billion-pound arms deal is in the pipeline.

Deeper and dirtier

The weekend following the High Court victory *The Observer* published an exposé of an aid and arms link in the case of Indonesia. The article alleged that a £16 million aid deal had been agreed for a roadbuilding project between Jakarta and Bandung involving UK-based construction company Trafalgar House and a company owned by the Suharto family. The article suggested this was a sweetener for an upcoming arms deal. Arms trade campaigners have been pointing out for some time that the Pergau Dam scandal was merely the tip of the iceberg and that Indonesia was a case which deserved further investigation.

The arms deal is estimated at between £2 and £6 billion, including the ongoing purchase of Hawk aircraft. It has also come to light that the Indonesians plan to purchase more than 100 Scorpion light tanks from Alvis,

a West Midlands-based company. The deals are valued at no more than £1 billion in total. It is suggested, therefore, that other equipment purchases are on the cards.

Such purchases, following the banning of the free trade union movement and critical sections of the free press in Indonesia, should raise real concerns. For a developing movement for democracy to gain ground, it is essential that the Indonesian military does not have a free hand in repressing campaigning activity. Yet the UK government seems intent on supplying it with the weapons to do precisely that.

Indro Sukmaji Thayono, a leading human rights campaigner who recently visited the UK as part of a tour organised by the European Network Against the Arms Trade, argued that an international campaign for an arms embargo on Indonesia would be an important part of encouraging demilitarisation and creating space in civil society for mass protest to develop.

Campaigns gather steam

On the day the November protest in Dili began, the third anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre, an international day of action was taking place. Cities and towns in North America, Europe and Australasia saw thousands of people take to the streets to protest at the continued Indonesian occupation, remember the dead of Dili and call for a military embargo on Indonesia.

In the UK, the arms sales have aroused a lot of public hostility. The campaign against delivery of Hawks and for a military embargo was boosted by the revelations in *The Observer* and by a week of television programmes on the arms trade. The 'War Machine' programmes brought home to millions of viewers what the arms trade means for people in the South and for the secrecy it engenders in British society.

In the summer, a coalition of groups concerned about the sales was launched under the title 'Stop the Hawks - No arms to Indonesia'. It now has the largest UK trade union, UNISON, as a sponsor and is attempting to build a broad-based campaign.

abroad and from East Timor'. It makes no reference to political questions, concentrating solely on the need for 'special consideration to be accorded to the administration of East Timor, given its distinct historical background, [the need to] safeguard its cultural heritage and reduce troop levels'.

Sydney meeting

The CNRM, Fretilin and UDT were planning to meet in Sydney on 16-18 December to prepare for wider talks between East Timorese

and to hone a negotiating position in advance of the next round of Portuguese-Indonesian talks, scheduled for 6 January in Geneva. According to José Ramos Horta, the initiative has the blessing of Bishop Belo and Xanana Gusmão which the Araujo-Lopez da Cruz initiative seems to lack. The meeting was to be attended by a senior official from the office of the UN secretary general, Francesc Vendrell.

Bishop Belo, meanwhile, says he is in dialogue with 'all parties', including the Indonesian government, to define a 'special status' for East Timor. He made this suggestion in a recent letter to the Indonesian government (*Timor Link* 30, page 8). ■

INTERNATIONAL ROUND-UP

AUSTRALIA

Labour Party calls for action

The Australian Labour Party, at its 1994 annual conference, passed a resolution on East Timor calling on the Australian government to put renewed pressure on Indonesia to account for the missing of Santa Cruz, punish human rights abusers, reduce the military presence in East Timor, preserve the culture of the East Timorese, assist the East Timorese economy, allow free access to human rights organisations and to grant clemency to Xanana Gusmão and other political prisoners. The resolution calls upon the Australian government to 'provide substantial aid to East Timor' and to open a consulate in Dili. The ALP conference felt that 'long term reconciliation between the Indonesian government and East Timorese people can only occur through a consultative process that fully involves representatives of all East Timorese'.

Finally, the resolution noted the 'continuing absence of proposals for an internationally supervised act of self-determination, and strongly supports the question of the recognition of East Timor's international status, which remains unresolved'.

Timor Gap pact addressed at the ICJ

Australia is to be tried at the International Court of Justice for its deal with Indonesia to explore the Timor Sea for its large oil and gas deposits. The case is being brought by a team of Portuguese lawyers led by Miguel Galvão Telles.

At a preliminary public hearing on 30 January in The Hague, lawyers from Portugal and Australia will present their statements of defence. Although the judges are not bound to pronounce a verdict within any specific time period, the decision of the ICJ is binding. If Australia is found guilty, therefore, it will have to abandon its claims on the Timor Sea, which may contain up to 5 billion barrels of oil.

UN award for Gusmão

The United Nations Association of Australia has bestowed upon Xanana Gusmão a human rights award in recognition of his ongoing struggle to achieve a just and equitable settlement for the people of East Timor and full recognition of their human rights. The award was made on the fourth anniversary of his offer, as head of the CNRM, to enter into formal discussions with the Indonesian Government under United Nations Auspices.

BRITAIN

Commons mission under fire

Aparliamentary delegation from the House of Commons travelled to Indonesia and East Timor in late September led by the Conservative MP for Teignbridge, Patrick Nicholls. Billed as cross-party, the delegation consisted of four Conservatives and two Ulster Unionists, and it appears that the Indonesian government paid the fares. The other members of the delegation were Charles Goodson-Wickes (Con, Wimbledon), Robert Banks (Con, Harrogate), James Hill (Con, Southampton East) Roy Beggs (Antrim E) and Cecil Walker (UUP, Belfast N)).

Nicholls' claims to have had extensive meetings with dissidents, including Bishop Belo in East Timor were put in doubt by an Englishman visiting East Timor at the same time. Edward Olsen-Hafstead noted that the MPs audience with the Bishop had lasted 10 minutes at most and that troops were kept off the streets during the MPs' three-day visit but returned in large numbers after they had left.

An exchange of letters in *The Times* led to further criticism of Nicholls. Bernard Levin published on 25 October a searing article 'Stop excusing tyranny', which slammed the government's fawning on 'Suharto and his thugs' while visitors like Nicholls 'speak good of evil'.

Pergau aid for arms fiasco

The British government suffered a humiliating defeat on 10 November when the High Court decided that the £234 million aid granted to Malaysia for the Pergau Dam project (*Timor Link* 29, page 6) was illegal, and an abuse of the aid programme. The aid was given on the understanding that Malaysia would place major orders for arms with British companies, in deals worth £1.3 billion negotiated by Margaret Thatcher in 1989.

Lord Justices Rose and Scott Brown found the project economically unsound and of no benefit either to Malaysia or its people. The World Development Movement, which obtained the judicial review, suggested that the money be returned to the British aid budget, where it can be used to benefit the world's poor.

The government was refused leave to appeal, and costs totalling £60,000 were awarded to WDM.

SOUTH AFRICA

Mandela visit

President Nelson Mandela of South Africa travelled to Indonesia in early September. He was widely believed to be on a fund-raising trip. Mandela was asked by numerous human rights groups and church organisations to raise

with President Suharto human rights abuses in Indonesia and East Timor, press freedom, trade union rights and the continued incarceration of Xanana Gusmão.

Although no public statement was made, it appears that some of these matters were discussed in private. Asked about his visit, Mandela said: 'I raised the issue of East Timor with President Suharto and he gave me a good hearing. My appeal for dialogue was received positively.'

Press reports of the Indonesian military engaging in secret dialogue with Xanana Gusmão began to emerge at around the time of Mandela's visit.

EAST TIMOR

Guerillas offer ceasefire

East Timorese guerilla leader Konis Santana apparently announced a unilateral ceasefire on 1 October 1994, on condition that the Indonesian authorities would release Xanana Gusmão and enter immediate face-to-face talks. The offer was made apparently in the light of the latest talks between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the United Nations.

The military responded negatively, and said a special battalion of combat troops was being prepared to neutralize the remaining guerrillas in the territory. ■

HUMAN RIGHTS

Abuses go unpunished

Amnesty International recently launched a worldwide campaign on Indonesia and East Timor. ROBERT BEASELY, campaigns coordinator of Amnesty's British Section, describes the background to its report *Indonesia: Power and Impunity* – an indictment of the Suharto regime and of the lengths to which other governments have been prepared to back it.

The Suharto regime has until recently largely escaped international pressure to improve its human rights record, despite gross and persistent violations dating from the inception of the New Order government in 1965. Even when international protests have been made, they have usually been restricted to practices in East Timor. Events elsewhere in Indonesia have

received scant attention.

Amnesty International's campaign seeks to redress this situation by drawing attention to the scale and scope of torture, imprisonment and murder committed under Suharto's rule throughout Indonesia. By highlighting human rights violations outside East Timor, Amnesty aims to demonstrate that these violations are not minor aberrations: they are systematic and occur within a political and legal framework that allows and encourages state repression.

Turning a blind eye

Regrettably, many governments (including Britain's) have been only too keen to accept the Indonesian government's line. Indonesia remains a massive economic prize: the world's fourth most populous country, with high economic growth rates and enormous potential for profitable trade and investment. For these reasons, the international community has been willing to turn a blind eye to its human rights misdemeanours.

In the three years since the Santa Cruz massacre, the Indonesian authorities have sought to limit the damage, by portraying it as an isolated incident and by taking a number of highly publicised – but inadequate – human rights initiatives.

The truth is rather different. Few regimes have shown such a casual approach to mass murder. Thousands of civilians were killed in counter-insurgency operations in Aceh province, northern Sumatra, between 1989 and 1993. In Irian Jaya, efforts against a tiny armed independence movement have resulted in hundreds of deaths.

Murder has been used as an instrument of the regime's fight against crime. Between 1983 and 1985, government death squads summarily executed an estimated 5,000 alleged criminals in Indonesian cities. In his memoirs, President Suharto even boasted that the killings were part of a deliberate policy of 'shock therapy' to bring crime under control. Hundreds of peaceful protesters and suspected political opponents have met a similar fate over the years.

Outlawing dissent

Such physical repression is underpinned by a political and legal system that criminalises any opposition to, or criticism of, Suharto's rule.

The Anti-Subversion Law and ill-named 'Hate Sowing' Articles provide a framework that can punish by imprisonment any dissent, protest or criticism. Since 1965, more than 3,000 people have been tried and sentenced to lengthy prison terms or death for alleged political crimes. They include 1,000 accused of involvement in the 1965 coup or of belonging to the communist party (KPI); some 500 muslim activists, preachers and scholars; hundreds of independence advocates from East Timor, Aceh and Irian Jaya; and scores of university students, trade unionists, peasant farmers, and human rights activists.

The death penalty has targeted political enemies too. Of the 30 people executed since 1985, 27 were political prisoners, most of whom had served more than 20 years in gaol.

Foreign governments have been keen to pretend such events are part of a bygone age. Britain's Foreign Office has consistently argued that 'it would be a mistake to confuse past history with today's realities'. The UK government points to a new era of political openness since 1989 and to steps taken by Indonesia to improve its international image.

Freedoms curtailed

Foreign governments do have a case when asking for today's reality to be taken into account. The trouble is, today's reality looks all too familiar.

Recent reforms and increased political openness spurred journalists, students and political activists to demand greater political freedom and respect for human rights, only to find themselves banned, gaoled or 'disappeared'.

In late June 1994, three leading Indonesian magazines were forced to shut down. More recently, six East Timorese were sentenced to 20 months in prison for unfurling a banner in front of foreign journalists in Dili in April. The banned trade union leader, Muchtar Pakpahan, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in November 1994 for 'inciting' workers to demonstrate and strike. Over the same period, reports of shootings of suspected criminals increased dramatically – all part of Operation Cleansing, the drive to rid Indonesia of political and economic criminals prior to the arrival of President Bill Clinton for the Jakarta meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Distortions

Confronted with this reality, the UK Government remains undaunted in its support for the Indonesian government. Although usually accepting the accuracy and credibility of Amnesty International's reports on other countries, the Foreign Office believes Amnesty has got it wrong with Indonesia. The Foreign Office is ably assisted by a small group of friendly MPs who fly out to Jakarta on expenses-paid trips, only to return after three days claiming to have seen and heard enough to challenge years of meticulous research by Amnesty and other human rights observers.

The British government has frequently been 'economic' with the truth when dealing with criticism of its relations with Indonesia. One standard Foreign Office approach has been to claim that 'military commanders accused of excesses at Dili were put on trial'. This is untrue. Ten police and military officials were charged with disciplinary offences and punished by up to 18 months in gaol. But there was not an officer among them. No one who ordered the slaughter was ever brought to account. Quite the opposite, General Try Sutrisno, the Armed Forces Commander, baldly announced: 'These ill-bred people have to be shot, and we will shoot them.'

A more recent distortion was made by Foreign Office minister Alistair Goodlad in the House of Commons, when he cited Amnesty International's report in his defence of the Indonesian government, claiming that it acknowledges improvements made by the Indonesians.

In fact, while noting some changes, Amnesty's report devotes an entire chapter to demonstrating how these changes are totally inadequate. The chapter catalogues the failure of the Indonesian government to implement the recommendations of the UN Commission on Human Rights and its associated bodies; details the restrictions on independent human rights monitoring; limitations of the National Human Rights Commission and the questions about the independence of its composition.

Political imprisonment, censorship, torture, political killings and more general harassment of protesters and critics have occurred throughout 1994 throughout the territories controlled by the Indonesian authorities. Yet the UK government has been unrelenting in its support for Suharto. Such an approach may add to the UK's balance of payments, but it brings little honour to the British government's cause. ■

CHURCH

Belo thanks US bishops

Bishop Belo has underlined the importance of international solidarity, as abuses continue in East Timor.

Bishop Belo, interviewed by UCANEWS on 29 July 1994, thanked the US catholic bishops for their statement on East Timor (*Timor Link* 30, page 2). Belo said he felt their solidarity reflected the spirit of Vatican Council II's 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world' (*Gaudium et Spes*), which encourages solidarity with the whole human family. He said the statement made him aware that 'the joy and hope, grief and anguish of the Bishop of Dili and his faithful in East Timor are the joy and hope, grief and anguish of the Catholic Church in the United States.

'I personally and on behalf of the Catholics of East Timor would like to thank the bishops and Catholics in the United States for their solidarity, sympathy and prayers for us,' he said.

UCANEWS (779A) reported the Bishop as saying the political and security situation in East Timor has not improved. 'Probably some people want to maintain this situation with the aim of taking advantage of it,' he said. 'In such a situation, we the bishops and priests, cannot carry out our pastoral tasks well.'

Bishop Belo said that, in his opinion, the way toward settlement of the dispute is still lengthy and fatiguing. 'We need solidarity from other local churches in the world,' he said.

The Bishop said he hoped that the US bishops' statement could be comprehended by President Clinton's administration and the US Senate.

English and Welsh bishops' visit

An English Bishop, Victor Guazelli, of East London, and Fr Pat Davies of the international affairs secretariat of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales visited East Timor in early October. They spent a week as guests of Bishop Belo, and led a 5,000 strong procession at an open air mass in Dili on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima. Addressing the massed congregation, Bishop Guazelli told the people that they had come 'to demonstrate the solidarity of our church with the local church in these difficult times'.

Bishop Belo expressed his gratitude for the solidarity of the church. He said it had direct effects – for example, when Fr Domingos Soares was arrested on trumped-up murder charges. 'The ambassador in London intervened because of the public outcry in England against the arrest,' said Belo.

Indonesian government rejects Belo letter

Bishop Belo's open letter to the Indonesian administration 'The document of the East Timor Catholic Church on East Timor Nowadays', issued on 31 July (*Timor Link* 30, page 8), in which he calls for more autonomy for East Timor, has been rejected by foreign minister Ali Alatas as 'irrelevant'.

Addressing a House of Representatives hearing on 15 September, Alatas said: 'Indonesia's youngest province already enjoys more privileges than other provinces.'

'East Timor already has autonomy in the substantive sense of the word, yet some people are pursuing the non-essential, such as the status of special territory,' he said.

Alatas told the house members Indonesia had rejected a similar proposal by CNRM leader José Ramos Horta calling for autonomy and a referendum. According to Alatas, in Ramos Horta's view, autonomy is only an intermediate target 'to pave the way for his dream of establishing a separate East Timorese state'.

Justice commission for Dili diocese

Bishop Belo has set up a Justice & Peace Commission for Dili diocese, saying that the situation in East Timor needs special attention. The Bishop, quoted in UCANEWS 778/A, said: 'The Church is called to proclaim justice and peace to all humankind. As the church of the poor, it is called to side with the poor, the weak and the oppressed.'

Bishop Belo feels the mission is not in con-

tradition with the five principles of Indonesian State doctrine, Pancasila: monotheism, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy and social justice. Quoting the preamble to the Indonesian constitution, he remarked that 'colonialism on this earth should be eliminated, since it is not [compatible] with justice and humanity'.

He had been encouraged in the initiative by the UN envoy Bacré Waly N'Diaye, who visited East Timor in early July to investigate summary executions. The Bishop defended his move in the face of Indonesian hostility. 'People should not be critical of me, labelling me as anti-integrationist when I speak about justice and peace in East Timor,' he said. 'I will always be critical if I see and experience, together with my faithful, unjust practices and disorder in this region. Integration should make people feel free. It should not make them feel they are living in another era of colonialism.'

The Indonesian government appears to see the Justice & Peace Commission as a threat to its recently established Human Rights Commission.

The commission consists of about 11 people, including an MP from Jakarta. Its members come from a variety of places, including Dili, Java, Flores, Sumatra and West Timor. Two East Timorese members are Armindo Mayer, vice rector of academic affairs of the University of East Timor, and Helder de Costa, director for planning, development and external relations at the university.

The first issue the commission has been asked to look at is the forced use of intrauterine devices and injectable contraceptives by East Timorese women, as well as instances of forced sterilisation. UCAN reported (787/A) that a fact-finding team chaired by Yacob Herin will conduct investigations into Indonesian military coercion of the women.

Cardinal Arinze visits Indonesia

Cardinal Francis Arinze, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, visited Indonesia from 21-29 July, where he appealed to religious leaders to work for greater understanding and co-operation among followers of different religions. En route to a Christian-Muslim meeting in Thailand, he said Indonesia is an example of 'how government can support harmonious existence between religions'.

'In our office in the Vatican' he said, 'we look into Holy Books and the practices of all religions in the world. All of them teach the Golden rule: what you want others to do unto you, you do to them.'

'If all believers observed this rule, they would share a small paradise in this world,' he said. Yet, Arinze added, all religions cannot be reduced to the same thing – harmony could only be achieved if every believer accepts reli-

gious pluralism, and thereby respects followers of other religions.

'For mutual understanding and co-operation, it is necessary for each believer to read and to try to understand other believers. Working with those who have a readiness to read and understand [others] would be less difficult,' he said. 'Sometimes, there are tensions and violence among different religious followers.'

But the cardinal added that a closer examination of the tension generally reveals it to have racial or ethnic roots, historical injustices or even economic causes. 'People exploit religion to reach what they want. That is very dangerous because whenever a religious war has been declared, people are not afraid of dying.'

To prevent such abuses, Cardinal Arinze said, the world needs more religious leaders who create an environment conducive to interreligious dialogue. ■

Timor Link Subscription form

☐ I wish to subscribe to *Timor Link*

☐ I enclose my subscription fee of £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Individual £10.00 for 4 issues
Institution £20.00 for 4 issues

☐ I have previously subscribed to *Timor Link*

☐ I am a new subscriber

Please send cheques made payable to CIIR to East Timor Project, c/o CIIR, Unit 3, Canonbury Yard, 190A New North Road, London N1 7BJ.
Tel 071-354 0883, Fax 071-359 0017.

Timor Link is published with the assistance of the Catholic Institute for International Relations on behalf of the East Timor Project. Contributors include Kirsty Sword, João Boavida and John Taylor.